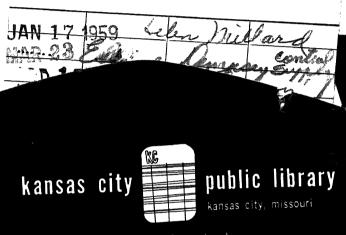
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THE STORY OF PRO FOOTBALL



Jim Thorpe
The Greatest of Football's Greats

HOWARD ROBERTS

The Story
of
Pro
Pro
Football

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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOG CARD NUMBER: 53-9336

First Printing, September, 1953

796.32 R64s

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FOOTBALL'S HALL OF FAME

PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL is the best football, so it follows that the best players, of necessity, must be professionals.

Understand, I have no quarrel with collegiate football. I enjoy it and appreciate its merits to the full. I feel an autumnal Saturday, no matter how beautiful, is wasted if it doesn't find me sitting in on a football game. But the college game no longer can compare with the professional, any more than the brand of baseball played at old Siwash can be likened to the major-league variety, or an Olympic boxing star be compared to a battle-tested champion of the prize ring. The line of demarcation between the amateur and the professional is as wide as the Hellespont and as difficult to bridge.

Scores of players are named each year to the myriad All-American teams selected from the nation's college grid stars. Yet how many of them make good in pro football? The percentage is surprisingly low. Many fall by the way-side, while others who attracted less attention or were hidden away in small schools, soar to the heights.

THE STORY OF PRO FOOTBALL

Who were the greatest football players of all time? Heffelfinger of Yale? Brickley of Harvard? Michigan's Heston? Or even such moderns as Chicago's Berwanger, Princeton's Kazmaier, or Army's Blanchard?

I think not. They were great; of that there can be no question. But for various reasons they didn't permit their talents to develop and mature in the professional field, in football's major league. They may be likened to Eddie Collins or George Sisler, had those baseball immortals elected to lay aside their gloves at the conclusion of their collegiate careers.

A hero-worshiping alumnus or undergraduate scarcely can recall from one season to another the stars of his college team. But will any Columbia man ever forget Sid Luckman and the deeds he performed in his twelve brilliant seasons with the Chicago Bears? Minnesota could not decide whether Bronko Nagurski was a tackle or a fullback, but by the time he had closed his professional career the world hailed him as the one fullback who could not be stopped—the man who ran his own interference!

As a collegian Bob Waterfield achieved considerable fame on the Pacific Coast; Bobby Layne made headlines in Texas; Otto Graham was a good halfback at Northwestern. Today millions of sports fans couldn't tell you where any of these three went to college, but they could talk for hours of their feats with the Los Angeles Rams, the Detroit Lions, and the Cleveland Browns.

Don Hutson didn't catch the popular eye until his afternoon of brilliance in the Rose Bowl in 1935, but today he is universally recognized as the greatest pass-catching end in football history through his feats with the Green Bay Packers.

Where did Sammy Baugh go to college? One person in a thousand, perhaps, could identify his school as Texas Christian. Yet thousands, perhaps millions, know him as the indestructible passer of the Washington Redskins, who was still setting records in his sixteenth season as a pro.

A young lawyer isn't allowed to plead a case until he has passed the bar exam. A physician cannot practice until he has undergone an exacting internship. So it is in football. A player is just learning his skills in college. He hasn't proved himself until he has completed his apprenticeship and earned his master's degree in the pro ranks.

This is the story of these true All Americans, of the growth of the league they raised from chaos to stability, of the game they popularized until it is the lustiest young giant on the nation's sports scene.

Thinking of these gridiron greats, even before I begin to tell their story, raises this suggestion—why not a Hall of Fame for football? Major-league football has passed its thirtieth birthday and is growing in stature with each passing season. Now, it seems, would be the time to lay the foundation for its Hall of Fame—now, while many of those who were active at its birth and in its early development are still alive and able to participate. The passing of Jim Thorpe, who perhaps comes closest to meriting recognition as the greatest individual player, points up the urgency of such a plan.

Baseball has its Hall of Fame, yet in more than threequarters of a century only some three score of the thousands who have played in the major leagues have been elected to membership. In a picturesque, rustic setting at Cooperstown, New York, where Abner Doubleday laid out the first baseball diamond, are enshrined plaques to such heroes as Babe Ruth, Ty Cobb, Tris Speaker, and Lou Gehrig, with a summation of the achievements that merited their perpetuation in bronze. Election is limited to those who have completed their careers, and so difficult is it of attainment that in many a year no one receives the required votes. Not even so storied a performer as Joe Di Maggio could make it in his first year of retirement, and such greats as Bill Terry, Ray Schalk, Bill Dickey, Red Ruffing, and Ted Lyons—to mention but a few—haven't come close to election.

Football's Hall of Fame could be located in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, where pro football purportedly was born, or in Ohio, where it grew up. Of course, we are taking it for granted that its membership would be limited to men who played professionally, for only the pros remain in the game long enough to merit distinction above and beyond the normal run of Saturday's heroes.

Thorpe unquestionably would be the first man selected, even as he was the first to head the professional league. The Indian's achievements are fundamental chapters in the story of America's great autumnal sport. So are those of "Red" Grange, who gave pro football its first real taste of popular favor. Those two belong for what they did for the game as well as for what they did in the game.

Joe Carr should be included because it was his fore-

Joe Carr should be included because it was his foresight and industry that made pro football the great spectator sport it is today. Elmer Layden, the first commissioner, belongs. So does his successor, Bert Bell, for his incessant war against the corrupting influences that have sullied other sports and for saving the National League from the challenge of the All America Conference. Arch Ward, Chicago sports editor, might be included, too, because his sponsorship of the All-Star game focused vast fan interest in the pros.

There are others who could be included for reasons aside from an ability to play football. "Shorty" Ray, for instance, the man who discovered there was nothing more boring than an 0–0 football game. Or referees like "Bobie" Cahn, Jim Durfee, and Tom Thorpe, who flavored a capable job of officiating with rare humor and understanding. Or Andy Lotshaw, who trained the Bears for three decades and who was such a master psychologist that he could crush a peanut shell between his teeth and convince an injured player he had popped a dislocated joint back into place.

Or owners like George Halas, Tim Mara, George Marshall, Art Rooney, "Dick" Richards, and Charley Bidwill, who contributed far more than money to the growth of the game; and Ted Collins, who lost a fortune at Boston and New York without once savoring the thrill of producing a winning team.

Let the National Football League announce such a shrine. The method of selecting its members would be immaterial. It could follow baseball's example, but in a contact sport such as football the true worth of a player can be overlooked by a spectator in the grandstand or press box. The players and coaches are best qualified to judge a man's worth.

The Commissioner could name a committee of men affiliated with the league from its inception, to determine which of the old-timers belong in the Hall of Fame. Then, at a yearly meeting let each coach name, from his many opponents of the previous season, a player who he believes merits consideration. If several coaches name the same player over a specified number of years, then he would automatically be elected on retirement.

The selection of players would provide the real fun—and more argument and recrimination than one of Senator Joe McCarthy's investigations. How, for instance, can one of today's specialists be accurately compared with the all-round football players of a decade and more ago? Sure, Otto Graham is a great quarterback, but how would he have stacked up with "Dutch" Clark or Cecil Isbell, for example, if he'd been forced to play both on offense and defense? Could Elroy Hirsch or Tom Fears have carried on for sixty minutes like Bill Hewitt or Guy Chamberlain or Wayne Millner?

It would be unfair to deny Sammy Baugh a place, because unquestionably he was the greatest passer in football history and one of the most durable. The free-substitution rule added many years to his amazing career, but Sammy was tops even when he had to play on defense and do the punting as well as the passing. Sid Luckman belongs in a niche right alongside "Slingin' Sam," for it was Sid who set the pattern from which all modern T-formation quarterbacks are molded. And "Dutch" Clark, who did everything superbly well.

Now that I'm into this, I may as well stick my neck all the way out and select a squad.

Fullbacks? Who could find three more desirable than Bronko Nagurski, Ernie Nevers, and Clarke Hinkle? The mighty "Bronk" could help out in the line if need be, he was that versatile.

Along with Grange and Thorpe as the halfbacks you could pick and choose without going far wrong. I'd take

Johnny Blood for what he could do when the mood was upon him and for the fun he'd have doing it. George McAfee, until he was slowed by injury and the years he lost in military service, was the most elusive runner I ever saw. He belongs. So does "Paddy" Driscoll. That leaves one spot open on a three-deep line-up. It could be filled by Steve Van Buren, Bill Dudley, Cliff Battles, or "Tuffy" Leemans. I'd take Battles.

Don Hutson practically rewrote the record books, so there can be no argument about his right to top consideration at end. Old-timers like George Halas and Steve Owen rate Guy Chamberlain as Hutson's running mate, and I'd string along with their judgment, but right at his elbow must be Bill Hewitt, the old "off-side kid" who loved the game of football and whose performance reflected that devotion. "Lavvie" Dilweg and Ray Flaherty would gladden the heart of any coach, and, for that matter, so would Mal Kutner, for the ex-Cardinal would be as valuable on pass defense as he would be catching passes on offense.

Against tackles like Joe Stydahar, Cal Hubbard, Ed Healy, "Link" Lyman, "Turk" Edwards, and Stan Mauldin no running attack would get far, and no defensive line would be impregnable to their charge. Among the guards, those forgotten men of football, I'd take "Mike" Michalske, "Hunk" Anderson, Danny Fortmann, "Ox" Emerson, Riley Matheson, and Len Younce.

Three centers stand out over the years—stolid Mel Hein, sturdy "Bulldog" Turner, and mercurial George Trafton.

No team, not even an all-star one, would be complete without a coaching staff, so I'd have Halas as head coach,

THE STORY OF PRO FOOTBALL

with Owen to plot the defenses, and Paul Brown to assist on offense

Aside from the coaches I have named, not one is still active in pro football. Unquestionably several of today's greats merit consideration. But the point is this—there should be a Hall of Fame toward which they could strive.

It would be too much to expect those fans who have followed professional football through the years to agree to all the candidates I have proposed as members of the Hall of Fame. I hope only that they agree with the idea itself. And in The Story of Pro Football that follows I think they'll find out why I selected as I did. There might even be a few who will be in complete agreement with me!

THE STORY OF PRO FOOTBALL

FOOTBALL PERFECTION 1

ANY PLAY perfectly executed is a touchdown. That's a truth which has been acknowledged by players, coaches, and just plain fans ever since football began its erratic flight across the sports map of America. Knute Rockne preached this gospel. So did A. A. Stagg, Bob Zuppke, Gil Dobie, "Pop" Warner, and Walter Camp, who started the All-American craze.

Unhappily—or from the standpoint of the spectators, perhaps fortunately—perfection is as rare in football as it is in any other form of human endeavor. Only once in history has a football team attained perfection, or near perfection, for an entire game. And as might be expected that team was a professional one—the Chicago Bears.

Yet only a trifle more than thirty years ago the very idea that anything good, let alone perfect, could be found in professional football would have been considered fantastic. The colleges, where the amateur game was flourishing, looked on the pros with misgiving, mistrust, and alarm. And not entirely without cause. There was little

rhyme or reason to the pros. Their league was a loosely knit organization of fly-by-night teams with players jumpknit organization of fly-by-night teams with players jumping from one to another from Sunday to Sunday, depending on which one offered the most flattering financial inducement. College players and even college coaches stole away from the campuses to pick up a few pro dollars on a Sunday. College leaders considered the pros so real a peril that in January, 1921, a Chicago paper emblazoned the headline: STAGG SAYS CONFERENCE WILL Break Professional Football Menace.

Break Professional Football Menace.

So radically have things changed in the brief years that tell our story that Stagg, once its most implacable foe, admitted readily at a banquet not long ago that he liked the professional sport and that it had contributed much to the development of the game of football. The ragamuffin from the wrong side of the tracks has been accepted by the sport's social leaders. And most of them were won over by the impact of that one hour of perfection enjoyed by the Bears on the bright, sunny afternoon of December 8, 1940, at Griffith Stadium, in the nation's capital capital.

The 36,034 fortunate fans who filled the stadium that The 36,034 fortunate fans who filled the stadium that day could scarcely believe what their eyes beheld. They even mistrust their memories. For that day the Bears defeated the Washington Redskins, one of the truly fine football teams of history, by the utterly fantastic score of 73–0! And this, mind you, in the play-off game for the championship of professional football!

So far-reaching were the repercussions of this day's happenings that by the start of the next season nearly every team in the land, both college and pro, had adopted the Bears' T-formation with man in motion. Yet, had it

not been for the Bears and their coach, George Halas, the T-formation might well have gone the way of the "dodo" and the "great auk." For at a time when other teams were exploiting the single-wing and double-wing formations, the Bears alone stuck with the "antiquated" T-formation and explored and refined its multiple advantages as an offensive weapon.

In light of the effect of this one game on the course of football it would be well to delve more deeply into it and to study its cast of characters.

The Bears, who had completed the regular season with a record of eight victories and three defeats, were just beginning to realize their full power and, but for World War II, might have become one of the greatest, if not the greatest, teams of all time.

Said Jimmy Conzelman, then coach of the Chicago Cardinals: "Halas never had so many good players at one time. I'd take his third team and guarantee to finish second in the league. I'd say I'd finish first, only Halas would have the other gang."

Directing the team was Sid Luckman, the shrewd, skilled ball handler and passer who set the pattern for T-formation quarterbacks. It takes fine quarterbacks and powerful fullbacks to make the T its potent best and the Bears had three fullbacks—Bill Osmanski of Holy Cross, Joe Maniaci of Fordham, and Gary Famiglietti of Boston University.

Steve Owen, veteran coach of the New York Giants, had vast admiration for this thundering threesome. "You get Osmanski out of there and what do you get?" he'd say. "You get Maniaci. And you get Maniaci out of there and what do you get? Famiglietti. And if you think he's any

bargain, you should try to stop him. He runs like Bronko Nagurski! He knocks your teeth out."

The Bear halfbacks included Ray Nolting, a veteran with explosive speed on quick-opening plays; rugged Harry Clark; slender Ray McLean; and a will-o'-the-wisp named George McAfee, a rookie from Duke who already had earned the nickname "One Play" because that's all he needed to break up a ball game. Lanky Ken Kavanaugh, who ran like a scared antelope, was at one end, sturdy George Wilson at the other. And the line contained such rugged giants as Danny Fortmann, Joe Stydahar, Lee Artoe, George Musso, and Clyde "Bulldog" Turner—each of whom won All-League honors at various times. The "Bulldog," then in his freshman year as a pro, was so indestructible that, after "retiring" as a center in 1951, he returned a year later to win a starting assignment at offensive right tackle.

Such were the Bears of 1940. The Redskins were

Such were the Bears of 1940. The Redskins were almost as fearsome a lot. They were led by Sammy Baugh, the greatest forward passer of them all, who retired in December, 1952, after sixteen years of record-shattering brilliance in the National Football League. Their roster included fellows like Dick Todd, Andy Farkas, Wilbur Moore, Frank Filchock, "Wee Willie" Wilkin, Steve Slivinski, and Charley Malone. They were coached by Ray Flaherty, who already had led them to one title.

The Redskins were good: so good that they had beaten the Bears, 7–3, three weeks earlier. Yet oddly around these were homeonics and it is a will for its property.

enough these very happenings made it possible for the Bears to rearrange those digits in the championship game. They did it with a combination of inspiration and perspiration, strategy and psychology, labor and luck.

The Bears felt they should have won the first game, and they probably would have, had not time run out on them. Forty seconds remained to play in the contest when, in the huddle, Bob Snyder, who was at quarter-back, thought up a play on the spur of the moment.

"Head for the goal line," he told McAfee, "and I'll hit you with the football."

He did. But Todd tackled McAfee from behind and brought him down after a gain of 49 yards. The Bears were only I yard short of the Washington goal line, but there wasn't enough time remaining to attempt a play unless time was called, and a time-out entailed a penalty of 5 yards. The Bears already had been charged with four time-outs, the legal limit, so that even though McAfee smartly feigned injury on the play, the Bears had no choice other than to take an assessment of 5 costly yards.

From the 6-yard line Snyder threw a pass incomplete. He fired another that bounced off Osmanski's chest just as the final gun sounded. It mattered not that Osmanski frantically claimed interference, maintaining Filchock had pinioned his arms so that he had no chance to catch the ball. That is, it mattered not except that the Redskins promptly dubbed the Bears "crybabies," a term that, unfortunately for the 'Skins, was headlined in Washington papers.

It made the Bears mad. So did some remarks by George Preston Marshall, the Redskins' owner, who classified the Bears as a "first-half ball club," inferring they lacked courage in the clutch. That wasn't the only unfortunate remark Marshall made, for on the eve of the title game he was heard to say that "the trouble with the league is that the strength is concentrated in the East!"

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Halas was not one to let these disparagements of his players' intestinal fortitude go unnoticed. He clipped them from the newspapers and pasted them on the bulletin board in the Bears' clubhouse in Chicago's Wrigley Field. He kept prodding the team with his psychological needle throughout the week preceding the championship game. Meanwhile the physical preparation was progressing according to a most meticulous plan.

Halas and his assistants—Heartley "Hunk" Anderson, Luke Johnsos, and "Paddy" Driscoll—pored over movies of earlier games against the 'Skins. They probed for weaknesses in the Washington defense, they discovered which of their own plays had been most effective against the Redskins, and they set their own defenses to harass Baugh to the fullest extent. They decided the best way to stop Sammy was to keep control of the ball so that he'd have only a limited opportunity to throw it. This campaign to shackle Baugh was to pay off richly inasmuch as the Redskins' running attack was to be slowed by injuries to Todd, Moore, and Farkas. ries to Todd, Moore, and Farkas.

ries to Todd, Moore, and Farkas.

The players saw the movies over and over again, watching their own mistakes and studying those of their opponents. They spent many more hours with films and chalk-talks than they did on the practice field. They plotted their first four offensive plays to test Washington's defense. They figured it would be the same the 'Skins had employed so successfully in fashioning their 7–3 victory, and they figured correctly.

"There was a feeling of tension on the club," Luckman recalls, "like nothing I ever experienced before or since. You felt something tremendous was about to happen."

Luckman and his fellow quarterbacks, Bernie Master-

son, Snyder, and "Solly" Sherman, had spent the week with Clark Shaughnessy, the football theorist who along with Halas and Ralph Jones had brought the T-formation to its explosive peak. Shaughnessy, whose Stanford team had won the Pacific Coast Conference championship, was brought in especially to groom the offense. Actually his contribution went far beyond that. "Bulldog" Turner credits him with the amazing events that were to come. "We were a pretty tense bunch of ball players in the dressing room before the kickoff," Turner relates. "It

was Shaughnessy who relieved that tension. He made the pre-game talk and you've never seen anyone so calm.

"'You can beat these Redskins,' he told us. 'And here's how.' He outlined a play we had charted as our second of the game. 'It will beat them,' he said. 'It might go for a touchdown the first time.'

"Somehow, we believed him. We went out on the field relaxed. We felt sure of ourselves and of victory."

The Bears won the toss and elected to receive. Nolting gathered in the kickoff and returned 22 yards from his 2-yard line. Now came the first charted play. Kavanaugh spread out 15 yards from his left end position. The Redskin right half followed him. Nolting, the left half, went in motion to the right. The Washington linebacker trailed him. Right then the Bears knew all they needed to know—the Redskins were employing the same defense as before.

Nolting shot inside his left tackle for 8 yards. It was second down, 2 to go on the Bears' 32. In the huddle Luckman called for the play Shaughnessy had said would work. It did, in spectacular fashion, although not quite according to the chart.

McAfee, the right half, went in motion and Luckman, making a reverse pivot, handed off the ball to Osmanski. The play called for Bill to make a direct drive off tackle, and he started that way, but McAfee's block hadn't quite removed the Redskins' right end, so Osmanski made a dip past his outstretched arms and swept wide around his left end. Kavanaugh had gone downfield to block one defensive back. Musso had pulled out to flatten the upman in the secondary, and George Wilson, burly right end, was steaming across the field behind the Redskin line.

Near the Washington 35-yard line Osmanski, doing a tightrope sprint along the side line, was being crowded dangerously by Ed "Chug" Justice and Jimmy Johnston, who were closing in to make the tackle. Just when it seemed they would force Osmanski out of bounds, Wilson, who had run completely across the field, hurtled in front of them. Both went down as though poleaxed, tumbling completely out of the field of play.

"That," said Halas later, "was the greatest, most vicious block I ever saw." His path cleared, Osmanski continued on a 68-yard run to a touchdown. Jack Manders kicked the point and the Bears led, 7–0, after fifty-five seconds. There was an aftermath to Osmanski's dash that shook

There was an aftermath to Osmanski's dash that shook Wilson even more than his monumental block. Osmanski shared a taxi with George and Mrs. Wilson returning to the hotel after the game, and in the course of the ride Mrs. Wilson congratulated Bill on his magnificent run.

"And that was quite a block that enabled you to go all the way," she added. "By the way—who threw it?"

George Wilson's reaction to that remark has never been recorded.

But to return to the game—the Bears kicked off to Max Krause, the only Redskin running back who was in perfect physical condition. He proved it by returning 62 yards, but when he was tackled on the Bear 32-yard line, he injured his knee so severely he was through, not only for the day but for all time. He never played football again. And the Redskins, thus shorn of their running attack, never had a chance after Malone dropped Baugh's pass in the end zone. The Bears deployed to stop Baugh. They did so—and that was all they had to do to stop the Redskins.

After that pass to Malone went astray, Bob Masterson attempted a field goal that was wide, and the Bears took over the ball on their 20. True to their plan of controlling the ball, they held it for seventeen consecutive running plays, Luckman scoring a touchdown on a quarterback sneak to climax a drive of 80 yards. Snyder kicked the extra point.

Baugh immediately took to the air in a desperate attempt to pitch the Redskins back into contention, but he was hurried and three passes went wide. Luckman then brought the punt back to the Redskins' 42-yard line. From there, on a play almost identical to the one that had sprung Osmanski into the clear, Luckman tossed a shovel pass to Maniaci, who ran for touchdown number three. This time Phil Martinovich kicked the point. It was 28–0 at half time as Luckman passed 30 yards to Kavanaugh, who made a leaping catch in the end zone after eluding Farkas and Filchock.

The Bears had proved themselves to be, as Marshall had said, a "first-half ball club." The job now, Halas reminded them in the clubhouse, was to prove they also

were a second-half team. They obeyed instructions almost to the point of cruelty.

to the point of cruelty.

On the second play of the third quarter Baugh attempted a short pass from deep in his own territory. Hamp Pool, the Bear end who became head coach of the Los Angeles Rams, anticipated the play, batted the ball into the air, caught it, and jogged 15 yards to a touchdown. Before the quarter had ended Nolting had run 23 yards for a touchdown, McAfee had scored one on a 34-yard sprint after intercepting a pass by Roy Zimmerman, and even Turner had tallied one by chugging 21 yards after intercepting another pass. In all, the Bears intercepted eight passes that day.

Clark scampered 44 yards for a score early in the fourth period, and Famiglietti bulled 2 yards for another following a Redskin fumble which the alert Turner recovered. The final touchdown came on a 48-yard thrust along the ground with Clark scoring on a plunge of a yard. Clark, incidentally, was the only multiple scorer of the day as the Bears shared their eleven touchdowns among ten men. Six different men added conversion points, Maniaci getting one on a pass from Sherman. By this time the Bears, at the request of the officials, weren't attempting to kick the points for one very good reason—the supply of footballs was exhausted and what is a football game without a football?

On each kick for point the ball sailed into the stands where an eager customer promptly appropriated it as a souvenir. The game ended with the teams ampleying the

where an eager customer promptly appropriated it as a souvenir. The game ended with the teams employing the only ball available—a rather battered number designed for use by youngsters on playgrounds but hardly suited for major-league championship play.

No account of this historic game would be complete without mention of what was seemingly the most ill-timed of announcements. It came over the public address system at a moment when the score was 54–0. Said the voice: "Ladies and gentlemen, season tickets for the Redskins' home games next season will go on sale tomorrow at the Redskins' ticket office." The whoop that greeted this announcement was an hysterical hodgepodge of hilarity and horror.

"Dutch" Bergman, sports writer, radio commentator, and then coach at Catholic University, summed up the feelings of the experts when he wrote: "I saw the perfect football team in the Bears. I have been associated with the game for 25 years as a player and coach but never in that time did I see a team that did everything perfectly, with such flawless execution, as did the Bears in humbling the Redskins."

Even the Washington fans, in their chagrin and disappointment, apparently agreed. They were so delighted with pro football that the Redskins' advance sale for the next season set a new record. And throughout the land the stampede to the T-formation was on. Professional football, after a rough and rugged and poverty-stricken infancy, had come of age.

THE EARLY DAYS 2

THE ONE FIRM LINK between the past and the present in pro football is Jim Thorpe, the magnificent Indian athlete whose career is renowned, even outside sports circles. Jim could do everything superlatively. He was a majorleague baseball player, he was without peer in football either in college or in the early rough-and-tumble, catchas-catch-can professional days. He was America's toast in 1912 when he won both the pentathlon and decathlon in the Olympic games.

Actually Thorpe was the first president the pro league ever had, being elected in 1920 to head the old American Professional Football Association, the organization that became the National League two years later.

Steve Owen, veteran coach of the New York Giants, like every other boy of the period, set Thorpe up as his football idol. It was with considerable trepidation, therefore, that Owen faced the husky Indian on the football field for the first time in 1923. True, old Jim had lost some of his speed and fire and dash by that time, but he still was Jim Thorpe and his very presence on the field gave an aura of distinction to the game.

Owen, fresh out of college, was playing tackle for a group known as the Oklahoma All Stars, and they were meeting the Toledo Maroons. On the first scrimmage play Owen bowled over the tackle and end opposing him and stormed into the Maroon backfield where he found himself face to face with his idol—Thorpe. Without hesitating, Steve continued his headlong charge, shoved a huge hand into Thorpe's face, knocked him down, and threw the runner for a loss of 5 yards. On the next play Owen repeated the tactics with similar results. On his way back for the next play he said in an aside to the guard at his elbow: "Old Jim has slowed up, I guess. He doesn't care for this blocking business any more."

The ball was snapped and for the third time Steve went crashing through exuberantly, ignoring Thorpe completely. This, he felt, was going to be murder. It was. The entire grandstand seemed to collapse upon him and he went thundering down in a heap. Jim Thorpe had thrown a block at last. Stunned and shaken, Owen staggered to his feet. As he did so he felt a friendly pat on the back and a voice said softly in his ear: "Always keep an eye on the old Indian!"

Once Knute Rockne, the famed Notre Dame coach, and his old pal, "Gus" Dorais, were hired to play for Massillon against Canton in the days when those two Ohio cities were trying to outbid each other for football talent. Thorpe was playing for Canton and twice in the early stages of the game Rockne, playing at left end, broke through to nail Jim for a loss.

After the second such embarrassment, Thorpe turned

to Rockne. "Rock," he said, "do you see all those people in the stands? They're here to see the old Indian run. Now be a good boy, Rock, and let the old Indian run."

Such a thought was abhorrent to Rockne, who played the game to the hilt at all times. He'd stop the great Thorpe once more. Or so he thought, until something with the power and weight of a truck struck him. He rolled over, unsteadily, and looked up just in time to see Thorpe crossing the goal line for a touchdown.

Before the teams lined up for the next kickoff, the red man winked solemnly at Rockne. "That's a good boy, Rock," he said. "You let the old Indian run."

Back in 1916 Canton and Massillon met twice. The Back in 1916 Canton and Massillon met twice. The first game ended scoreless, Thorpe being hurt early in the fray, and the story got about that he would be unable to play in the rematch a couple of weeks later. It has been said that Thorpe personally planted this rumor and then bet \$2,500 on Canton in the second game at better odds. Whether or not this is true, Thorpe scored every point as Canton won the return match, 23–0.

"To have Thorpe tackle you from behind was an experience you couldn't forget," recalls George Halas of the Bears. "He wouldn't actually tackle you. With his great speed he'd run you down and then throw his huge body crosswise into your back. It was like having a redwood tree fall on you."

During the 1919 season Thorpe got off two punts that

During the 1919 season Thorpe got off two punts that sailed for 75 yards. Each was caught by "Tuffy" Conn, who ran through the entire Canton team until Thorpe himself made the tackle.

Nothing could intimidate the imperturbable Indian. In 1923 he organized a team composed entirely of Indians.

They represented the Oorang Kennels in Indiana and were known as the Oorang Indians. Among the animals at the kennels was a big bear which was kept in a divided cage. He'd be kept in one portion of the cage until it needed cleaning, then moved to the other side. Later the procedure was reversed.

One week the bear developed a stubborn streak. He steadfastly refused to move and no amount of coaxing, prodding, or persuasion could budge him. The supervisor was furious. He summoned Thorpe.

"Get that bear moved," he ordered, "or you and all your Indians can get out of here. Either that bear moves or you do."

Thorpe wanted the money represented by those football games, so he went to work. He cursed, he pleaded, he cajoled. The bear refused to move. Then old Jim got mad. Peeling off his coat, he strode into the cage. He tugged, he grunted, he pushed, and he cursed some more. And he also pushed the recalcitrant bear into the other cage. Then he came calmly out to pick up his coat, unruffled save for a few scratches and a torn shirt.

Thorpe was far and away the best of the Indian players, but there were many good ones in pro football's early days. Among them were Joe Guyon, Pete Calac, Mount Pleasant, Little Twig, and Big Twig. The latter, a true showman, would wear an Indian suit over his uniform when running signals for the Buffalo Bisons, and occasionally he'd don it of nights when on the streets of the city where the team was playing.

The first pro football game, insofar as the records reveal, was played at Latrobe, Pennsylvania, on August 31, 1895, sponsored by the local Y.M.C.A., with Latrobe

defeating Jeannette, 12–0. The sport spread rapidly through Pennsylvania, and in 1902 Connie Mack claimed the national championship for his Philadelphia Athletics with Rube Waddell, the eccentric baseball pitcher, in the line-up.

Mack brought his team to Pittsburgh to play the Pittsburgh Pros but found few people knocking at the gates. For a time it seemed the game would not go on, for Mack insisted on his guarantee in order to pay his players.

A distinguished appearing man came up to Mack and asked, "What is the delay?"

"I'm waiting for my guarantee," replied Mack.
"How much is it?" the man asked. He was told it was \$3,000.

"Is that all?" he replied. "I'll give you my personal check for it."

"Who are you?" Mack inquired.

"I'm William Corey, if that means anything to you."

It didn't, but it should have. Mr. Corey was head of the Carnegie Steel Company. The game was played to a 0-0 tie.

By 1905 the pro sport had swung westward into Ohio, and the Canton Bulldogs and the Massillon Tigers were organized. It was ten years, however, before these two cities, along with Columbus, Akron, and Dayton, became the real cradle of the game. The rivalry among these thriving industrial cities crowded into a compact area was so intense that each went to great lengths to outbid the others for talent.

Many of the collegiate grid greats picked up a few dollars in the early pro days. It was common practice for

college players, and even coaches, to sneak away from the campus to play as a pro on Sunday.

Once Massillon hired so many players, along with

Dorais and Rockne, that there were forty-five on the bench, each promised \$75. Most of them never got into the game. On another occasion an entire college team, pausing in Cleveland en route from a game, played the Columbus Panhandles. The collegians called themselves the Cleveland Indians for this day only.

the Cleveland Indians for this day only.

Lou Little recalls one Saturday when he played in a coal mining town in western Pennsylvania. He and his teammates were forced to wear their headgears while going between the clubhouse and the field, for the hostile crowd was pelting them with lumps of coal. In the course of the game he injured his leg. He was booked to play with the Buffalo team in Buffalo the next day, so sat up all night on the train, soaking the leg to reduce the hemorrhage and swelling. He felt he couldn't afford to pass up the \$25 he could earn in Buffalo.

While Earle "Greasy" Neale was coaching at West Virginia Wesleyan, his friend John Kellison arranged for him to play with Canton. It took a bit of oratory on the part of Kellison to persuade Thorpe that Neale would help the team. Bill Soucy of Harvard was Canton's left end, but Kellison insisted, "Neale can shove one hand in his back pocket and catch passes better than Soucy."

pocket and catch passes better than Soucy."

"He's your friend," Thorpe argued. "I only have your word for it."

"If Neale doesn't do a good job," Kellison proposed, "keep my salary and use it to pay him."

That convinced Thorpe, for money talked in those

days as loudly as it does today. And he was right happy

about the whole thing, for "Greasy" caught six touchdown passes in his first game. Neale and Kellison each received \$75 for the day's work.

The colleges naturally frowned on the practice of their stars and coaches playing for money on the side, so Wesleyan dispatched Rev. Richard Aspinall to catch Kellison and Neale in the act. The two got wind of the

Kellison and Neale in the act. The two got wind of the trap, however, and stayed at home.

Asked the next day what he had seen, Rev. Aspinall replied: "I saw the best football player I've ever seen—Jim Thorpe. He won the game all by himself."

Thorpe used to assemble his players in a hotel room and ask how long each thought he'd be able to play. They'd say: "Put me down for a half," or "Make it forty minutes, Jim." He'd pay in proportion to the time and effort expended. Kellison, who had agreed to play for \$75, played a particularly brilliant sixty minutes one day and, being in a hurry to return home, asked Thorpe to pay him off at once. Jim handed him \$100.

"But I agreed to play for \$75." Kellison protested.

"But I agreed to play for \$75," Kellison protested.

Thorpe peeled off still another \$25 and gave it to him. "You were the best damn player on the field," he said, forcing the entire \$125 upon Kellison.

About this time "Kell" made the acquaintance of the fabulous Nesser brothers. He was holding the opposing end, so he couldn't get downfield for passes, and Fred Nesser became so aroused, he muttered: "I'll kill you when the game's over."

At the final gun Nesser rushed at "Kell," and he was preparing to defend himself when Nesser thrust out a hand. "Put 'er there, kid," he said. "That's the way to play the game!"

The Nessers formed what is the only football family in history. There were seven of them in all—six brothers and the son of the eldest. Ted, the elder and bald-headed, was first a bone-crushing fullback and later, when he had lost his speed, a lineman. The others were John, Phil, Fred, Frank, Al, and Ray. Al, a fine end, played with Cleveland through 1931.

The Nessers all were boilermakers—big, rugged, and tremendously strong. All, as their other teammates, were employed in the Panhandle division of the Pennsylvania Railroad in Columbus, and it was from this affiliation that they took the team's nickname, "Panhandles," and its colors of maroon and gold. Legend has it that the father of the family served as water boy and the mother laundered and mended the uniforms, or so says Dr. Harry A. March in his book, *Pro Football, Its "Ups" and "Downs."*

Manager of the Nessers and the Columbus team was Joe F. Carr, a smallish, shrewd, and kindly man whose vision and foresight led to the formation of the National Football League. And one of the primary factors that led him and his right-hand man, Jerry Corcoran, to propose such an organization was the fact that rival teams would "steal" one or more of the Nessers for a tough game by offering them more money than they were drawing from the Panhandles.

Indeed, no player was bound to a certain team. He could move around as he saw fit, landing each week where the dollars were most abundant. The Panhandles faced Rockne six times in a single season, each time as a member of a different team!

The visiting club, even in the early days of the National League itself, usually would be paid in cash, a

policy that would have tempted some astute holdup man were it not for the size and strength of the people involved. George Calhoun, for many years press agent for the Packers, recalls how he perspired during one cab ride through some of the dark back streets of St. Louis. "Cal" clutched tightly to a brief case which he believed contained the receipts for a night game. But Coach "Curly" Lambeau was taking no chances. He had removed the money from the brief case and placed it inside the headgears of the players, who were still in uniform.

George Trafton, the colorful old center of the Bears, always seemed to get into trouble in Rock Island. After one game in which he was accused of putting a couple of rivals out of commission for the day, he was pursued from the field after the game by a group of irate citizens who pelted him with rocks. A year later when the Bears played in Rock Island, their share of the gate was some \$7,000. Coach George Halas handed the money to Trafton to carry.

"I knew," Halas explained, "that if trouble came I'd be running only for the \$7,000. Trafton would be running for his life!"

THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

3

Professional football's first formal organization had its inception at a meeting in Akron on August 20, 1920, presided over by Frank Nied and A. F. Ranney. Plans were formulated for an association, and it was agreed that no club should sign a player still attending college or dicker with any player attached to another pro team.

A month later, on September 17, a larger group met in the garage of Ralph Hay in Canton and formed the American Professional Football Association with Jim Thorpe as president, Stan Cofall as vice president, and Ranney as secretary-treasurer. The membership fee was set at \$100 and the clubs represented were the Canton Bulldogs, Cleveland Indians, Dayton Triangles, Akron Professionals, Massillon Tigers, Racine Cardinals, Hammond, Rochester, Rock Island, Muncie, and the Staley A.C. of Decatur, Illinois.

A year later the group was reorganized with Joe E. Carr as president, and each club was assessed \$25 to cover the miscellaneous expenses of the association. In

June, 1922, on a motion by George Halas, the name was changed to the National Football League, but many years were to elapse before it became truly national.

In Joe Carr the league had a leader dedicated to a

In Joe Carr the league had a leader dedicated to a cause even though his yearly salary was a mere \$1,000. He brought about the adoption of a standard player contract patterned after the one used in professional baseball; he established and defended territorial rights for the individual clubs; and he campaigned earnestly to interest financially independent businessmen to acquire franchises, thus giving the game a stability it had lacked since the first football was kicked for money.

Carr's interests extended to baseball, too, and as promotional director of baseball during the depression when the number of minor leagues had dwindled to nine, his industry and organizational genius rekindled tremendous interest. After he had succeeded in making the minors a thriving concern again, Branch Rickey told him: "If you'll give up football, I'll make you the biggest man in baseball." Carr shook his head. "If that's the price I'd have to pay," he replied, "I'll have no part of it."

The colleges looked with increased disfavor at the pros after "Red" Grange had jumped from the University.

The colleges looked with increased disfavor at the pros after "Red" Grange had jumped from the University of Illinois to the Bears in 1925 after completing his collegiate eligibility, so Carr set about healing the breach. At a meeting held in Detroit in February of 1926, almost before Grange had ended his gold-rush exhibition tour, the National League made its peace with the colleges by adopting a resolution. It read:

The National Football League places itself on record as unalterably opposed to any encroach-

ment upon college football and hereby pledges its hearty support to college authorities in maintaining and advancing interest in college football and in preserving the amateur standing of all college athletes.

We believe there is a public demand for professional football and to the end that this league may not jeopardize the amateur standing of any college player, it is the unanimous decision of this meeting that every member of the National Football League be positively prohibited from inducing or attempting to induce any college player to engage in professional football until his class at college shall have graduated, and any member violating this rule be fined not less than one thousand dollars or loss of its franchise, or both.

And a year before this forward step, in 1925, pro foot-ball had been overjoyed by a pat on the back and a word of approbation from the Associated Press. This press association for the first time began to carry the results of all games on its trunk wires because it "felt that the National Football League had kept faith with the public in all matters."

It was in the Carr regime, too, that the playing rules were streamlined, the divisional setup established with its resultant championship play-off, and the All-Star game series arranged. The latter is a pre-season spectacle originally conceived by Arch Ward, sports editor of the *Chicago Tribune*, as a feature of the Century of Progress in 1934, but which has grown in popularity and scope until

it is football's glamorous annual coming-out party. It brings together the champions of the National League and

brings together the champions of the National League and a team selected from the ranks of the graduated seniors among the previous season's collegiate stars.

It was the impact of this game on the sports public that precipitated much of the latent growth of the pro sport. Through it many fans discovered for the first time what the pros had to offer, and they developed an interest in the collegiate stars who were turning in increasing numbers to the pro field following the All-Star game.

At first the pros took the collegians too lightly. They didn't bother to get into top physical condition; they were blasé and cynical, with a senior's tolerant, amused attitude toward a freshman. After a few lickings, however, they began to bear down to preserve their prestige. Since

they began to bear down to preserve their prestige. Since then, they have held a consistent margin of victory.

Joe Stydahar and Danny Fortmann, two of the great linemen of the Chicago Bears during the late thirties and early forties, played side by side on the All-Star team against the Detroit Lions in a 7-7 game. Their reaction was typical.

was typical.

"We were hit hard in that game," Fortmann recalls, "but not subjected to the beating we had expected. We began to think we had picked a snap in turning professional. How wrong we were! We found that out in a hurry when the Bears met the Lions later in the year. I've never seen such a change in a team. The Lions of that day would have chased our All Stars right off the field."

Joe Carr's firm but benign rule over the National League ended on May 20, 1939, and there are many who believe he actually worked himself to death. Carl L. Storck, who had been named secretary-treasurer under

Carr back in 1921, succeeded him to the presidency, with the task of handling the league's financial affairs passing on to Dennis J. Shea, who had been in the theatrical field until turning to football at Boston in 1932.

In 1941 the pros felt the need of a commissioner with powers such as those baseball had endowed in Judge K. M. Landis. The man selected was Elmer Layden, one of Notre Dame's "Four Horsemen," who had been head football coach and athletic director at his Alma Mater. He also assumed the office of president of the N.F.L. when Storck resigned because of ill health shortly thereafter.

The councils of the N.F.L. always have been crammed with outspoken men, rugged individualists who can battle tooth and nail in league sessions without once endangering their close friendship. Layden thought he sensed antagonism from Tim Mara of the New York Giants.

"You don't like me, do you, Mr. Mara?" he asked.

"That's nonsense," snapped Mara. "I don't like you and I don't dislike you. I just don't know you. But I'll tell you this—I don't like the way you got your job.

"And I'll tell you something else. I wouldn't be surprised if the day would come when all the rest of these guys will be hollering for your scalp and I'll be the last one in your corner."

That is precisely the way it turned out. Five years later, when the matter of the renewal of Layden's contract came up, with Ted Collins of Boston leading the opposition, Mara was Layden's most staunch supporter. At length Bert Bell, a pioneer in developing pro football in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, was within one vote of selection as commissioner and his supporters cornered Mara, seeking his vote.

"I'm not against Bert," Mara told them. "I think he would make a good commissioner. But I won't vote for him unless you all agree to assess each club \$2,000 and pay Layden another year's salary."

That's the way things finally were worked out.

Layden had mastered the difficult task of guiding the league through the war years and had not only kept the league intact but managed to maintain a high caliber of football and close, keen competition. But even before the shooting war was over, Layden found himself embroiled in another kind of war. The All America Conference had

been formed by Arch Ward, and the rival league was raiding the N.F.L. ranks with fanciful offers for talent.

When the A.A.C. began to take shape, Layden advised it to "first get a football," a remark that was to haunt him when his own club owners began to feel the pinch on their pocketbooks occasioned by the riotous counterbidding for players.

The A.A.C. was the second major threat to the well-being of the old established league. Back in 1926 C. C. Pyle, with the great "Red" Grange under contract as his gate attraction, established a new league with "Big Bill" Edwards, the old Princeton star, as its president. Pyle himself held the New York franchise and the Bulls were

set up in Chicago as a rival to the Bears and Cardinals. The public, however, wasn't ready for such a heavy diet of pro football and the league disbanded after one season.

The All America Conference was a more sturdy and determined foe. Its club owners were men of independent means and they were willing to spend money. For four years they waged a determined battle—a costly one for health factions but a variable gold mine for the plane. both factions but a veritable gold mine for the players,

who drew fantastic wages as each league stubbornly refused to let the other collar the "name" performers.

Bell's first decision when he became commissioner in 1946 was one of his toughest. It involved two pro players and a gambling incident at the championship play-off game of the season. Bell suspended indefinitely both players and promptly launched a vigorous campaign for stronger federal and state laws to combat gambling and to set up sharp punishment for attempts to "fix" sports events.

Once Bell spotted a gambler who had been circulating rumors that a N.F.L. game was fixed. He pursued the man into a restaurant and backed him against a wall, demanding the source of the rumors. Thoroughly cowed, the man admitted the story was a hoax by means of which he hoped to improve the odds.

Peace between the National League and the All American Conference came only nine days after the representatives of the latter first approached Bell on November 30, 1949. Negotiations were conducted so quietly that Bell left the meeting in order to make his weekly appearance at a press luncheon given by the Philadelphia Eagles. He explained that if he failed to appear, newspapermen would become suspicious and come to his office to see what was up.

In reorganizing the two leagues into one, only three of the A.A.C. teams were retained—San Francisco, Cleveland, and Baltimore. Financial troubles forced Baltimore to drop out after one season, but another group of backers restored the city to the National League ranks for 1953 after Dallas had failed completely to make a go of the pro game in 1952.

THE STORY OF PRO FOOTBALL

One of the first problems confronting Bell in the reorganization meeting after peace had been declared was the settlement of conflicts over rights to players. Baltimore, for instance, had drafted Leon Hart of Notre Dame. So had Detroit. The Lions had drafted Doak Walker of Southern Methodist and so had Cleveland. Pittsburgh and Cleveland both claimed Lynn Chandnois of Michigan State.

The only case decided at the full meeting was that of Hart, who was awarded to Detroit. Bell personally solved all other conflicts. He ordered all teams to keep the thirty-three players they had on their rosters at the end of the 1949 season. These no other team could touch. Each team could keep three additional players on its reserve list, but all others were tossed into a common pool for reselection. Where there were conflicts, the teams were to dicker with each other, and if no agreement could be reached, a coin would be tossed to determine which team was awarded the player in question.

For two days arguments raged over the proper alignment of the thirteen teams into divisions for schedule purposes. At length Bell's patience wore thin. He banged his gavel.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I am going to settle this for you!"

The owners hastily asked for fifteen minutes to consider the matter. As they huddled, Halas outlined a proposition and moved its adoption, Mara seconded, and it was adopted by a 12–1 vote.

Peace, it was wonderful.

WHISTLE STOPS 4

Lou Kolls, huge center who played with the Rock Island Independents before he became a major-league baseball umpire, carried on an implacable feud with George Trafton of the Bears. The officials blithely ignored their slugging, holding, and fighting.

"We figured we might as well let 'em kill each other," laughs Norman "Bobie" Cahn in recollection. "If we didn't, we'd have been calling double fouls all day anyhow."

Cahn, who stood only 5'1½" and weighed but 137 pounds wringing wet, was one of the ablest of a group of colorful, tolerant, capable officials who steered pro football through its early, turbulent days. In his white knickers and black stockings "Bobie" looked like a little boy who had wandered by mistake onto the field with grown men. But coupled with the physique of a mouse, he had the courage of a lion. He'd dive headlong into the pile-ups of struggling giants to retrieve the ball, and he was always the big boss on the field. Also, like most of his contemporary whistle-tooters, he had a sense of humor that saw him through some rough situations.

Once, in a game at Green Bay, Cahn found occasion to read the riot act to a big tackle of the Bears. Leaning back like a tourist looking up at the Empire State Building, Cahn was shaking an admonitory finger when Cal Hubbard of the Packers lifted him bodily and held him aloft until his face was level with the tackle's.

"Now talk to the guy," said Cal.

"That made me feel a bit ridiculous," Cahn says, "but when Hubbard dropped me on my head—that was downright embarrassing!"

Hubbard, he maintains, knew the rules better than any player he encountered in twenty-three years as a pro official. "He was my salvation more than once," says Cahn, "in breaking up arguments. But I can't say I enjoyed the way he'd do it. He'd come up and say: 'All right, fellows, let's break it up. The little boy is right. Let's play foothall."

"Bobie" took particular delight in silencing the outcries of George Halas. In a game at Detroit, Halas and "Potsy" Clark, the Lions' coach, were following the teams up and down the field, attempting to hide behind the light towers while shouting instructions to their squads. Finally Cahn called time-out and waved his arms, summoning Halas and Clark from hiding and into the middle of the field.

"Dr. Livingston," he said, "meet Mr. Stanley. And now get the hell off the field and back to the bench. From now on you get fifteen yards every time you move!"

On another occasion Cahn strode right past Halas while pacing off a penalty against the Bears. George,

deeply moved, shouted: "Cahn, you stink!" "Bobie" kept right on going for an additional 15 yards, then turned. "How," he shot back, "do I smell from here?"

Jim Durfee, who antedated Cahn as a pro official, liked the games to move smoothly with a minimum of argument or penalty, and he liked close games. Frequently if one team was hopelessly behind, he'd edge his way into its huddle and suggest plays that might work and help make the game a contest.

When Cahn was first breaking into the league, he served as umpire in a game in which Durfee was referee. "Bobie" spotted a flagrant bit of holding, blew his whistle, and, pointing to the spot of the foul, called out: "Right here, Mr. Referee. Holding, right here."

Durfee strolled over and threw a friendly arm around his shoulder. "Young man," he said, "we're working a perfect game today. There will be no fouls."

If Durfee was endowed with too much enthusiasm, he also had a stubborn streak. When he made a decision, he stood by it. Not even the Supreme Court could have made him change his mind.

One day a wave of Giants broke through to smother a Pittsburgh passer just as he was about to throw the ball, which dropped in a tiny arc over the shoulder of the Giant end who hit him first. Durfee ruled it an incompleted pass, whereupon Steve Owen, the Giants' coach, stormed out in protest, claiming the Steeler had intentionally grounded the pass and that a penalty should be forthcoming. Durfee was firm.

"I was right on the spot" he told Owen "and looking"

"I was right on the spot," he told Owen, "and looking the man squarely in the eye. I could see plainly that the poor kid had no intention of grounding the pass."

THE STORY OF PRO FOOTBALL

Before a game between the Giants and the Bears, Halas called Durfee's attention to a play he had diagrammed on a piece of paper.

"I want you to watch for this screen pass of the Giants," Halas said. "It is absolutely illegal."

Durfee, Halas, Owen, and the other officials bent to

study the diagram. Then up spoke Owen.

"He's got it all wrong, Mr. Durfee. Besides, you are smart enough to call an illegal pass if you see one!"

Durfee beamed. "You're damned right I am, Steve.

Get off the field, Halas!"

That afternoon the Giants used the illegal play several times for good gains.

Milan Creighton, coach of the Cardinals, once raced onto the field to protest a penalty. Durfee immediately stepped off an additional assessment of 10 yards. "What's that for?" Creighton asked.

"For you coming out on the field," said Durfee.
"But," protested Creighton, "the penalty for that is fifteen yards."

"True," agreed the imperturbable Durfee. "But you aren't worth that much!"

Durfee was working a Bear game in Wrigley Field when one of those multiple fumbles finally wound up in the hands of a member of the visiting team who had been knocked out of bounds and crawled back in time to pounce on the ball. Trafton, never one to miss an argument, screamed in protest when Durfee ruled it a legal recovery.

"Now, now, Georgie," chided Durfee, "that play is specifically covered under rule five, section three, page twenty-three. Let's get on with the game."

Several days later Trafton, out of curiosity, looked up Rule 5, Section 3, page 23. It read:

No player shall wear equipment which, in the opinion of the referee, endangers other players, and all men must wear on the back and front of their jerseys identification numbers.

Tom Thorpe, another "old-school" official, enjoyed rough, vigorous play just as did Durfee and Cahn. He also had a talent for modifying existing rules or making new ones if nothing else fitted the occasion.

For instance, a player once complained because an opponent held him illegally. "Sorry," said Thorpe, "I didn't see it. Besides, you're strong enough to take care of yourself."

In another game Thorpe watched one player "work over" an opposing lineman until the other could stand it no longer and swung a tremendous punch. The original troublemaker rushed to the referee's side.

"Mr. Thorpe," he cried, "did you see him slug me?" "Sure did, sonny," replied Thorpe. "And you certainly had it coming to you."

Steve Owen was once the recipient of a similar rough going-over and swung a left hook in retaliation at a time when he thought Thorpe wasn't watching. As they carted Steve's foe away, out cold, Thorpe whispered: "Be nice, Steve. Be nice!"

Thorpe was officiating at a game between the Giants and Brooklyn, and it was fraught with all the bitterness that usually attends meetings between denizens of the Polo Grounds and Ebbets Field. The Brooklyn quarterback inquired about the down and was informed by Thorpe it was the third down coming up. The Dodgers ran a running play which failed to net the necessary yardage, then a prolonged debate brought out the fact it actually had been fourth down. The Giants claimed the ball.

Thorpe shook his head. "It's Brooklyn's ball, fourth down," he said.

The Giants argued: "But they had their fourth down. You just admitted it."

"All right, all right," said Thorpe. "Then it's fifth down. But fourth, fifth or nineteenth, it still is Brooklyn's ball. I'm not going to make a forty-yard gain for your team or penalize Brooklyn for a dumb mistake I made. I can call both sides offside and throw out that last play. I might think up something else to get by. But it's just a waste of time to argue, because it is Brooklyn's ball and it stays Brooklyn's ball. So let's go, boys!"

Thorpe was a deeply religious man and couldn't abide profanity on the field, or off. He warned one player repeatedly for cursing and finally put him out of the game.
"What rule did I violate?" the player demanded.

"The Golden Rule, sonny," shot back Thorpe.

Once while working a Bears' game, Cahn was bawled out by a player for his language. It was the first year in the league for Joe Stydahar, one of the top tackles of all time, and "Bobie" dashed over to upbraid him for some infraction.

"What the hell" he began.

"See, here, Mr. Referee," Stydahar stopped him in his tracks, "I don't curse. And I won't stand for anybody cursing me, either. Understand?"

Until the early forties, sports writers frequently doubled in brass as officials in the National League. Wilfrid Smith and Irv Kupcinet of Chicago were among the best as was Stan Baumgartner of Philadelphia. Ed Cochrane's career was cut short by a knee injury about the time the league decided to bar all scribes and to form officiating teams that would work together as units from week to week.

Credit for the development of the officiating units, streamlining of the rules, and speeding up of play is given by most pro authorities to a scrawny little man named Hugh L. Ray, better known to the sports world as "Shorty."

"Shorty" Ray was an active official for more than thirty years and the only man ever to officiate in three sports in the Big Ten—football, baseball, and basketball. A master of detail, after becoming technical director for the National Football League in 1938, he took more than 300,000 stop-watch observations to bring football to its present scientific stage.

In 1925 Ray organized the American Officials Association, conducted rules-interpretation meetings, and forced officials to make written reports on each game handled. In 1929 the National Federation of State High School Athletic Associations, impressed by the Chicago experiment, asked him to write a football code. It became the model for all football rulebooks. One of his greatest compliments came when the All America Conference was being organized. On the table was a copy of Ray's N.F.L. rulebook.

He proved that attendance at professional games has risen with the improvements in offense and the inevitable

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increase in touchdowns per game. He also discovered that the faster the game is played, the more time it consumes. This is not as contradictory as it may sound, because the faster you play, the more plays you create; and the more situations you develop, the more often the clock is stopped by incomplete passes, out-of-bounds kicks or runs, touchdowns, touchbacks, field goals, and the like. He once proved to "Curly" Lambeau that the Packers beat themselves in a game against the Bears by "playing too fast."

He discovered, too, that 51 per cent of a team's offensive plays originate in its own territory and only 5 per cent between the opponent's 10 and the goal line. He found there are more plays in the second quarter than in the first, and more in the fourth period than in any of the preceding three.

Undoubtedly his greatest contribution, however, has been in forcing officials to master the rules. "Once upon a time," Ray says, "officials couldn't score ninety-five on a written test—even with the rulebook open at their elbow. Now they can better ninety-five without the rulebook."

PAPA BEAR 5

THE BEARS OF 1941—sometimes called the best football team of all time—had just defeated their bitter rivals, the Green Bay Packers, in a play-off game for the championship of the Western division of the N.F.L. A reporter sought out George Halas, owner and coach of the fabulous Chicago team, and above the hubbub of the dressing room inquired what play of the game gave him his greatest thrill.

"That's easy," grinned the happy Halas. "It was Bob Snyder's second field goal."

The reporter cupped his hand and whacked himself on the ear, confident this appendage was playing tricks. He couldn't have heard aright. Snyder's second place kick had made the score 33-7 in favor of the Bears. What was the importance of three points at that stage of the game? Why should that kick give the coach such a thrill?

"Because," replied Halas, "it meant the Packers would have to get four touchdowns to beat us. I didn't think they could do it."

At another time, on the practice field, a broad-shouldered young man approached Halas and introduced himself as John "Bull" Doehring. "Do you want the best passer in football?" he asked.

Halas nodded. "I want the best of everything," he replied.

In these two statements is found the key to the driving force, the indomitable will to win, that has made George Halas a dominant figure in the development of pro football and his Bears the most consistently successful,

over a period of years, of the many play-for-pay clubs.

The Halas imprint is everywhere on pro football. His teams have won seven world's championships. He, together with Clark Shaughnessy and Ralph Jones, developed the T-formation with man in motion to such a high state of perfection that it became the most popular offensive system in football. He was the moving spirit behind most of the rules changes that turned pro football from a tug-of-war between giants into a wide open, highscoring spectacle.

His Bears were the first pro team to hold daily practice. They were the first to use movies of games for study and analysis of their own and opponents' mistakes. They were the first team to use a major-league baseball park as their home field and the first to use tarpaulins to protect the gridiron from the ravages of weather. They were the first team to make a barnstorming tour, the first to have the field announcer name the ball carrier and yardage gain on each play, the first to have a team song. It is called, appropriately, "Bear Down, Chicago Bears."

All this to George Halas is the fruition of a dream.

The seed from which the dream germinated was planted

back in 1917 by Bob Zuppke, the famous coach on whose University of Illinois teams Halas was a star before enlisting in the Navy during World War I. At the squad banquet at the end of the season "Zup" complained because he must lose his best players through graduation just when they were getting good.

That made sense to the shrewd young Halas. He was just beginning to learn the intricacies of football, and he still had the urge to play. If he felt that way, so must a lot of players after they left college. By golly, he'd try to organize a team when he got out of the Navy.

Uncle Sam stationed Halas at Great Lakes, where he found himself a member of one of the great football teams of the time, one which defeated the Mare Island Marines in the Rose Bowl on New Year's Day, 1919. Among these sailors were Jimmy Conzelman, Hugh Blacklock, John L. "Paddy" Driscoll, John Lauer, Jerry Jones, and Harry Eilson. Some of them set a precedent by playing in the Rose Bowl before they had competed in a single college game. Nearly all took a fling at the pro game within the next few years, thereby giving the sport its first tremendous boost in popular favor.

When released from the Navy, Halas turned his attention first to baseball, demonstrating sufficient skill to merit a tryout with the Yankees. The man who helped him most in polishing his fielding was "Ping" Bodie, who was on his way out as a major leaguer but eager to advise a hustling rookie. He taught so well that when the time came for the squad to be trimmed for the trip north, Bodie was cut and Halas retained.

"I've always felt badly about that," George recalls. He felt bad physically, too, before the exhibition schedule

was completed, for after hitting a triple off the great Rube Marquard, he injured a leg sliding into third base. Halas never fully recovered from that mishap which cost him the fine edge of his speed, and after one season at St. Paul he turned his back on baseball and thereby gave pro football another tremendous shot in the arm.

A. E. Staley, who owned a corn products company in Decatur, Illinois, hired Halas to head the corporation's athletic program and to organize a football team. Here was the chance to make his dream come true, and he leaped at it. While playing on the Staley baseball team and supervising the sports program for employees, he found time to scour the Midwest for football talent.

His search brought to Decatur such notables as Burt Ingwersen, Hugh Blacklock, George Trafton, Jake Lanum, Ed "Dutch" Sternaman, Walter Pearce, Leo Johnson, Charley Dressen, Bob Koehler, Guy Chamberlain, and others. In September, 1920, Halas sat in on the founding of what is now the National Football League, so his new team had an organized league in which to play. The Staleys were beaten but once, and on a share-the-profits basis each player pocketed \$1,900 for his season's work.

The year 1921 brought a business recession that forced Staley to curtail his athletic program, so Halas moved the football team to Chicago with the help of a \$5,000 check from Staley advanced on the understanding the team would retain the name of his company for the year. In making the move Halas took "Dutch" Sternaman as a partner, and the two negotiated a deal with William Veeck, Sr., then president of the Cubs, for a lease on Wrigley Field.

Those were precarious days, and Halas and Sterna-

man would make the rounds of the city's newspaper offices in the extracurricular role of press agents, trying to get some mention of their team in the public print.

"We were always greeted cordially," Halas recalls.

"We were always greeted cordially," Halas recalls. "They listened attentively, or at least politely, then tossed our written releases into the wastebasket. We hopefully looked for some mention every day—one of those little one-inchers that come in handy to fill out a column. And, by golly, did we cheer when we found one!"

A Halas conversation to this day is punctuated with "by golly's and "I mean's." To those who know George best, these expressions are considered stalling devices to throw the listener off the track while Halas is choosing the exact words he wishes to use to express an idea.

George never makes a hasty statement and seldom gives a meaty answer to a question. Reporters find an interview with Halas usually a most unrewarding experience. They may take elaborate notes on a long conversation and then discover to their dismay that George actually has said nothing pertinent to their questions.

Born on Chicago's great West Side, Halas is Bohemian by extraction rather than by temperament. He was an all-round athlete in prep and college circles, always busy in some activity other than in the classroom or on the athletic field. He has carried this amazing zeal for work into his business life. The proverbial one-armed paperhanger with the itch is a peaceful man compared to Halas.

His interests today, in addition to his football team, include a jewelry and sporting-goods mail-order house with a retail outlet near Chicago's famed Loop, a laundry, and real estate. Of late he has invested in oil, and new wells keep coming in faster than halfbacks looking for a

contract to sign. "He is," says his old friend and once bitter coaching rival, Jim Conzelman, "the nicest rich man I know."

There was a time not so long ago, however, when Halas was hard pressed to raise enough money to retain his beloved Bears, who still constitute his one overwhelming interest. That was in the depth of the depression after the 1932 season when he had to raise \$38,000 to buy out Sternaman's interest in the team. Halas rounded up a group of financial backers, putting up his own stock as collateral, the \$38,000 to be paid in a down payment and notes maturing in six and twelve months. Four of his backers, however, couldn't raise the money for their promised support. In this crisis Ralph Brizzolara, a lifelong friend, Jim McMillen, former Bear guard, and George Trafton's mother came to his assistance; but Halas was still \$5,000 short. Charley Bidwill, who later owned the rival Cardinals, arranged a loan for this amount, and the Bears were saved for the man who conceived them.

Because of his knack for turning a buck to his profit, there are many tales of Halas' parsimony, largely unfounded. When Tommy Harmon was being graduated from Michigan with a tremendous reputation as an All-American performer, the Bears drew draft rights to him. Harmon, being an astute young man, placed a high price on his services, and he and Halas engaged in some long bickerings. While they were in progress, someone asked Halas if there was a chance Harmon would come to terms. "I'm afraid so," said George.

His players laugh over the tales of woe he can give them when they seek more money. Yet they all like him, admire him, and would go through hell or high water for him; and once a year George invites them all back for a huge "Homecoming" party.

Once the Bears played an unprecedented string of four pre-season exhibition games in eight days, by way of getting in playing condition. They won them all. Halas was so elated he announced in a clubhouse meeting that each player would receive a bonus of \$300. On hearing this news Gary Famiglietti, fullback, emitted a whoop that shook the rafters. Halas beamed. "For this display of enthusiasm," he said, "we'll make it \$350."

When Joe Stydahar came out of the Navy in 1946, Halas asked what terms he wanted in his new contract.

"I'm all washed up," the veteran tackle told him. "Write in whatever you consider the right amount and I'll sign."

The contract Halas submitted to him called for \$8,000. "That's twice what I ever was paid before," Stydahar relates, "but that's the kind of a guy Halas is."

Perhaps Halas doesn't drive a hard bargain but, like Shylock, he demands his pound of flesh. Once a week during the regular season, usually on a Wednesday, he requires all players to step on the scale in his presence. For each Bear he has assigned an appropriate poundage, and the Bear must hew to that figure. For each additional pound disclosed by the scale, the fee is \$100.

The system of fines Halas has established has netted

The system of fines Halas has established has netted the club treasury a small fortune. The mistake of reporting late for practice has cost many a Bear a plaster of \$25. No excuse stands up. Driscoll, as an assistant coach, caught one fine and so did Trafton, who claimed he was immune from fines because he "had a piece of the club."

One night while the team was in New York, Charles "Ookie" Miller, former Purdue center, felt the need for a

bit of recreation. He spent the evening at the Cotton Club listening to Cab Calloway's band, but Halas caught him returning to the hotel past the curfew hour and forthwith fined him \$100. Miller, on the theory that Halas would forgive and forget, played the game of his career the next afternoon. He was all over the field, making tackles on defense, opening gaping holes on offense. The Bears won and "Ookie" was expecting a pat on the back when Halas approached him in the clubhouse after the

game. Instead he received a casual glance.

"Nice work, Miller," said George icily. "Guess I'll fine you before every game hereafter!"

"That," says Miller, "was my most unusual day in football. It was the only time I ever had to pay good money to play in a game!"

The Bears periodically are forced to pass written examinations to be sure they know their assignments on their myriad plays. At the first practice after each game every player must submit a written report analyzing the opposing team's play. One day Joe Maniaci, who was in mufti because of injuries, came empty-handed to the Tuesday-morning practice.

"Where's your report?" Halas asked.

"I didn't make any," said Joe. "I wasn't in the game."

"So what?" Halas stormed. "You saw it, didn't you!"

Halas and the Bears kept the T-formation alive long after most football folk considered it outmoded. He kept it intact, although employing the single wing at times in 1934 when he was blessed with the happy combination of Bronko Nagurski and Beattie Feathers. With the manin-motion refinements added by Jones and Shaughnessy, the Bears and the T revolutionized football with that 73-0

rout of Washington. But for them, the system would have died.

Halas, in his football tactics, as someone once pointed out, is like a magician who summons a stooge onto the stage, fans out the pack, and asks him to take a card. The stooge, of course, forgets that the magician forces him to select the card *he* wants him to choose.

"George is like that," the man says. "He makes you an unconscious stooge. George wants you to set your defenses a certain way. At first glance it looks like the defense which will stop him, but that's where Halas has you fooled. Fix your defense the way he wants you to and—bingo!—you're a dead pigeon.

"You're like the guy on the stage when the magician says, 'Three of clubs.' You stand there with your mouth open and wonder how in hell he did it!"

Sometimes the Halas strategy backfires. For instance, the Bears were the most adroit practitioners of an old clock-beating gag of faking injuries. The rules once declared that when an injured player was taken from the game, no time-out was charged. The Bears overplayed their hand getting around this ruling although contributing greatly to the art of dramatic acting.

The Bears' greatest time-stretching achievement came in 1938 when in three losing games they lengthened the final two minutes—a total of six minutes' playing time—into almost an hour. No fewer than twenty-seven Bears were "hurt" in that period. It was Halas himself who proposed an amendment outlawing this practice, his decision perhaps stemming from the day both Fortmann and tackle Del Bjork were stretched out on the field. A sub came rushing in for Bjork, who was feigning in-

jury, but Fortmann, who was actually hurt, had to remain in the game!

Halas overstepped his bounds, also, in the matter of engineering trades whereby he obtained the first draft choices of other clubs, which he utilized, in turn, for the benefit of the Bears. Things reached their climax during the winter convention of 1940 when Halas owned the Steelers' number-one choice. The Steelers had first choice, the Cardinals second.

Halas asked Coach Jimmy Conzelman if the Cardinals would like to secure the rights to "Jarring John" Kimbrough, fullback from Texas A. and M. Conzelman admitted he would. "Okay," said Halas, "you take him when your turn comes. I'll have the Steelers pick someone else for me."

Through this generous gesture, the Bears obtained Norm Standlee, the Stanford giant. And so shocked was the rest of the league that a rule was adopted prohibiting sale or trade of a team's first two draft choices without first obtaining unanimous consent of all clubs, or until the player had put in one season with the selecting team.

The Halas impact on pro football also is reflected in the record book. He still holds the mark for the longest run with a recovered fumble. The incident took place in 1923 on a day when Wrigley Field had been transformed into a morass by a downpour. Water stood deep on portions of the field, especially that part in which the Bears were striving to stave off a scoring drive by Jim Thorpe's Oorang Indians.

The Bears were backed tightly against their own goal line, and Thorpe crashed over tackle for what he hoped would be a touchdown. Hugh Blacklock, sensing the play,

met the big Indian head-on, precipitating a fumble. The ball popped straight into the arms of Halas on the 2-yard line, from where he beat a zigzag course for 98 yards and a touchdown, with Thorpe in pursuit all the way.

Halas had another memorable encounter with an Indian a year or two later. The Indian was Joe Guyon, a fine halfback. Guyon dropped back to pass, drifting toward the side line as he did so. Halas pursued him, determined to rack him up with such violence he would cause the Bears no more trouble that day.

George charged in and took off on a noteworthy dive. Guyon, his back turned, seemed a perfect target. But Halas had forgotten one thing—the old saying you can't sneak up on an Indian. Guyon threw the ball, whirled around in almost the same motion, and swung a knee so that it caught Halas squarely amidships, smashing four ribs.

"What really hurt, though," Halas says, "was the fifteenyard penalty I received for clipping!"

Halas always has had a knack for molding a pattern of play and then fitting his players to it. Some might not have been able to play at all for other teams, but with the Bears they became stars. Perhaps this can be traced to his ability to instill into everyone what he chooses to call "the old Bear spirit."

Once Halas feared the Bears were about to be split by internal factions, so he called his men around him and read off a list of names. He stood two small groups on either side of the clubhouse, then turned to the rest. "These," he said, "are the so-and-so's who are breaking up your ball club. Are you going to let them do it?"

That was the genesis of one of the great Bear teams.

RED GRANGE AND CO. 6

GEORGE HALAS is a firm believer in the old adage: "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em."

In 1921, after the Staleys had changed their name to Bears because they played their home games in the Cubs' ball park, Halas found himself playing across the scrimmage line from a tackle named Ed Healy, then employed by the Rock Island Independents. It occurred to George that this might be an ideal time to try out a new type of block he had dreamed up, one which involved, he confesses, "just a wee bit of holding." "Dutch" Sternaman gained 7 yards on the play and Healy was bellowing: "Holding! You were holding me, Halas. Do that again and I'll knock your block off."

The same play was run again with the same result, a neat gain by Sternaman. "I was still on my hands and knees," says Halas, "when some sixth sense told me to duck. I had my face half-averted from Healy, and I unconsciously leaned farther away. It's a darned good thing I did, by golly, for Healy's fist whizzed past my nose

so fast it buried itself up to the wrist in the ground." The resulting chorus was discordant. Halas was screaming, "Slugging! Put him out of the game!" Healy was hollering, "Holding! Halas was holding me!" And the officials paid not the slightest heed.

"Right then," Halas admits, "I decided I would much rather have Healy on my side than playing against me." And having so decided, George set about making the first player deal in the history of the league.

The Rock Island club had completed its schedule and Walter Flanagan, its owner, owed Halas \$100, so the deal was not difficult to negotiate. Flanagan kept his \$100 and let the Bears have Healy—a bargain indeed for a man critics still consider the best tackle ever to play.

Not long thereafter Halas decided it would be advisable to have "Paddy" Driscoll on his side, too, inasmuch as the ex-Northwestern star's drop-kicking had cost the Bears several games. It wasn't until 1926 that he was able to accomplish this purchase, however, and when he did the price was considerably higher—\$3,500 to be exact but still a bargain. Driscoll to this day is a Bear, serving as an assistant coach

The master stroke by which Halas and Sternaman made the Bears, and pro football, came in 1925 when they signed Harold "Red" Grange, the most publicized football player of his day or any other. In a twinkling the amazing redhead transformed what had been a dismal season for the Bears into a bonanza and brought to pro football in the space of a few furious weeks more attention than it had received in all history to that time.

No other football player has come close to equaling the feats of Grange, who was known as "Old 77" or "The Galloping Ghost"—one nickname stemming from the uniform number he made as much of a household byword as Babe Ruth's "3," the other from the manner in which he'd slip, like a wraith, from the arms of wouldbe tacklers. Even in bare statistics his ball-carrying achievements are breath-taking.

In 237 football games Grange gained approximately 32,820 yards, or more than 6 miles. He carried the ball more than 4,000 times for 531 touchdowns and his lifetime average gain was 8.2 yards!

During his four years at Wheaton (Illinois) High School he carried the ball some 1,260 times in 36 games for 10,800 yards and 180 touchdowns. In three varsity campaigns at the University of Illinois he carried 750 times for 3,637 yards and 31 touchdowns, while in professional competition, including exhibition games, he ran 2,003 times for 18,383 yards and 320 touchdowns. And he topped off his career by becoming one of the great defensive backs.

Single-handed, Grange had ravished Michigan and devastated Penn. He had run wild against nearly every collegiate opponent, and his feats had been cleverly exploited by Illinois' veteran publicitor, L. M. "Mike" Tobin. By the time "Red" neared his final college game against Ohio State, the newspapers were full of speculation as to whether he would turn pro. Some contended he should remain at Illinois and spurn the pro dollars as something unclean; others argued he should strike while the iron was hot and cash in on his reputation as quickly and dramatically as possible. While all this furor was taking place, Grange's destiny was being shaped at a conference in a Chicago hotel room.

Present in that huddle were Halas and Ed Sternaman representing the Bears, and Charles C. "Cash and Carry" Pyle and Frank Zambreno representing Grange. The haggling over terms lasted more than twenty-four hours with Pyle driving a hard bargain. Grange maintains that Pyle is the only man he ever knew who possessed greater endurance than Halas.

"Charley could outlast George," he says, "but it was a great match."

The night after the Ohio State game, Grange sneaked down a fire escape of his Columbus hotel to escape the newshounds, slipped into a taxi that was waiting for him, and boarded a Chicago-bound train in the railroad yards. In Chicago he hurried to the Belmont Hotel and registered under an assumed name, while reporters kept a close lookout at the Morrison Hotel, where Pyle was quartered. That afternoon he sat on the Bear bench and watched his teammates-to-be whip Green Bay. So great was his popularity that more than 3,000 fans besieged him for autographs until police rescued him.

On Thanksgiving Day, Grange made his pro debut against the Cardinals before a capacity crowd of 36,000 at Wrigley Field in a game that wound up scoreless. Grange, in the safety position, had no opportunity to run back punts for the very good reason that the astute Driscoll refused to kick to him. The holiday meeting between Chicago's pro teams normally grossed about \$14,000. Grange's take alone for this meeting was \$12,000. By the time another fortnight had passed, he and Pyle each had pocketed some \$50,000, splitting their end down the middle, with Pyle paying all promotional expenses out of his share. In addition, of course, Grange was reaping

a handsome reward from testimonials, endorsements, and similar side lines.

In his rush to extract the most from a quick market, Pyle nearly killed Grange and the Bears. On the Sunday following Thanksgiving, Grange gained 140 yards as the Bears beat the Columbus Tigers, 14–13, and although the game was played in a snowstorm, the magic of Grange's name lured 28,000 customers. That was the start of the most strenuous schedule ever attempted by a football team—eight games in twelve days! This marathon was to prove the ruggedness of these early pros.

The weather played a trick on the Bears and Grange in St. Louis, holding the crowd to 8,000, but the redhead rewarded the hardy fans with four touchdown scampers against a misfit team recruited for the one game by an undertaker named Donnelly. Three days later the Bears defeated the Frankford Yellowjackets before 35,000 and twenty-four hours later they whipped the Giants, 14–7, before 65,000 in the Polo Grounds with "Red" scoring a touchdown to make the vast assemblage happy. The Frankford game had been played in rain and mud and, inasmuch as the Bears had only one set of uniforms, they had to face the Giants in cold, wet, clammy jerseys, stockings, and pants.

Joe Sternaman, clever little quarterback and field goal specialist, tackle Don Murry, and end "Duke" Hanny played the entire 120 minutes of those two games on successive days without relief. After one day of rest they were back in action again at Washington, winning 19–0 despite the fact Grange gained only 6 yards from scrimmage. The next day in Boston they lost to the Providence Steam Rollers.

In Pittsburgh on December 10 Grange received a kick in the upper left arm and was led from the field after carrying the ball once for 3 yards and catching one pass for 4 more. The other Bears were battered, too. Johnny Mohardt was badly bruised, Laurie Walquist had a broken toe, Milt Romney a twisted ankle, "Dutch" Sternaman an injured shoulder, Joe Sternaman a lame knee. Ed Healy and George Trafton had leg injuries, and Halas himself had a boil on his neck. Trainer Andy Lotshaw was busy at all hours trying to piece together eleven men to take the field the next day.

In Detroit on December 12 Grange was unable to play and most of the fans got refunds on their tickets, for they cared only about "Red," not about the Bears. The next day the battered Bears returned to Chicago, where 18,000 welcomed them home as they lost to the Giants 9-0. Grange, ignoring the agony in his arm, played as advertised but could do little. Some of the others couldn't play at all, things becoming so desperate that Oscar Knop, the fullback, was stationed at one end.

As soon as the wounded had recovered, the Bears added a few extra players and equipped all hands identically with knickers, loud socks, and sweaters with the word "Bears" emblazoned across the chest and the player's uniform number on the back. Then they set off on a barnstorming tour that carried them to Florida and westward to the Pacific Coast. By the time they returned home, Grange's profits in the short months since he had left the Illinois campus had mounted to \$100,000.

Oddly, the injury that deprived Grange of his "super" offensive skill and turned him into a defensive specialist occurred in 1927 in a game against the Bears while he

was competing for C. C. Pyle's New York Yankees. He tripped over Trafton and twisted his right knee so badly he was on crutches for six months.

"That injury ruined my career," he says. "I never could run or cut again. I was just another halfback."

He wasn't "just another halfback," despite his own opinion, for his native football intelligence and shrewdness saved a championship for the Bears in 1933. The Bears were leading the Giants in the first play-off in N.F.L. history, 23–21, when Harry Newman passed down the middle to Dale Burnett for 28 yards on the final play of the game. Only Grange stood between Burnett and a score; and running only a step behind Burnett was Mel Hein. Grange sensed that Burnett intended to flip a lateral pass to Hein, so he tackled high and pinioned Burnett's arms. The lateral was never thrown.

One later Bear, who would have reveled in the marathon tour with Grange, was a man who typifies the Bears just as thoroughly as Halas and Grange—Bronko Nagurski. The "Bronk" was probably the most amazing and durable physical specimen ever to tuck a football under one arm and proceed to knock an opponent's brains out. "Doc" Spears, who coached him at Minnesota, where he won All-American honors at tackle, claims he could have been an All American at any of the eleven positions, he was so good and so versatile.

Bronko was the personification of power. He stood 6–2 and weighed 230 pounds, with tremendous legs which possessed speed to match their vast drive. He simply ran over opponents. On one afternoon two tacklers got a clean shot at him in the open field. Both were carried off with broken collarbones.

"There's only one way to stop him," declared Steve Owen of the Giants. "That is to shoot him before he leaves the clubhouse."

Tackling Nagurski was one of the more certain ways of committing suicide. The astute Owen devised the plan of having his defensive men throw themselves in front of the "Bronk" in a sort of rolling block, the idea being merely to trip him up.

"I find," said Owen, "we don't lose so many players that way."

Grange loves to recall Nagurski's first game against Green Bay. Grange and the "Bronk" were protecting the kicker on the right side, with Nagurski the deep man. Late in the game Cal Hubbard, mammoth Packer who switched between end and tackle in those days, approached Grange.

"Next time the Bears kick," said Cal, "let me by. I'll guarantee not to block the kick. I just want to get a shot at Nagurski. I've been hearing how hard he is and I want a crack at him."

"The next time we punted," Grange chuckles, "I let Hubbard go past me, then turned around to watch. Cal hit the 'Bronk' and bounced. He caught up with me as we ran down the field.

"'That's enough,' Hubbard muttered. 'He's just as hard as they said.'"

It was the "Bronk" who brought the jump-pass to its high point of efficiency when the Bears moved back to championship heights in the early thirties for the first time since their inaugural campaign in the league. He'd start on one of his bull-like charges into the middle, and as the line braced to repel him, he'd stop short, jump up, and shoot a lob basketball toss over the heap into the hands of an end who had come around behind the enemy line. If the opposition laid back to guard against a pass, Nagurski would rip through for great chunks of yardage.

In 1937 he successfully combined football and wrestling as simultaneous careers with a disregard for physical well-being that would have delighted the barnstorming Bears of 1925. In one span of three weeks he wrestled eight times from Vancouver, British Columbia, to Philadelphia, and played in five games with the Bears. He quit after that season, but six years later came out of retirement to lead the Bears to another championship. One of the Cardinals, after tangling with Bronko in 1943, said: "That guy's not thirty-five years old. He's lying. He hits just as hard and is just as tough as the Nagurski of ten years ago!"

When the Bears and Nagurski got around to winning a championship in 1932, however, it was not under the leadership of Halas. He had dropped the coaching reins after the 1929 season and turned them over to Ralph Jones, a little bald-headed man who had been developing fine teams at Lake Forest Academy.

"We thought it best," said Halas, "to get a competent coach."

Along with the coach the Bears also acquired Bill Hewitt, one of the great ends in history, and a unique halfback named John "Bull" Doehring. Hewitt, a granite-chinned, bristly-haired individualist, disdained the protection afforded by a headgear. He played bareheaded until ordered by the league to don the customary safety device. He had an explosive start that made him the forerunner of jet propulsion.

Sports writers dubbed Hewitt "The Off-side Kid," yet officials who worked Bear games of the period insist he seldom, if ever, was off-side. His secret was watchfulness and timing. He'd line up at his left-end position on defense a step or two behind the scrimmage line. He learned the habits of each opposing center so he could discern, by a tightening of fingers on the ball or some other telltale sign, just when the ball was to be snapped. With the help of this advance tip-off, he was in motion almost before the ball had been snapped. Actually the ball was on its way almost at the split second Hewitt reached the line of scrimmage.

To close each practice, the Bears frequently ran a play called the "Stinky Special," Hewitt having been adorned with the inelegant nickname of "Stinky." On this maneuver, Bill would take the ball on an end-around play and wind up by throwing a long pass to Luke Johnsos, the opposite end.

No one, least of all Halas, expected the play ever would be used in a game, yet the Bears employed it to pull a decision out of the fire against the Packers in 1933. Green Bay was leading, 7–0, with about two minutes to play, the ball in the Bears' possession on the Packer 35. In the huddle Carl Brumbaugh, one of the smartest of T quarterbacks, called for the end-around, then winked at Hewitt and Johnsos. The play caught everyone by surprise, even the Bears, as Hewitt tossed a perfect pass to Johnsos in the end zone. A rookie named Jack Manders promptly came in to kick the extra point—the first of 72 he was to boot in succession before the wind carried one against an upright.

The Bears then kicked off and held for downs, forcing

the Packers to punt with seconds remaining. Hewitt blocked the kick and pounced on the ball in the end zone for victory.

In the previous year, however, the Bears weren't exactly a ball of fire offensively. For five games they didn't cross an opponent's goal line and wound up the season with a strange record of seven victories, a defeat, and six ties! Opponents frequently asked: "Have the Bears any offense at all?"

As things turned out, they had enough to win the 1932 championship. And they won it in one of the strangest games in history, played on a makeshift gridiron in the Chicago Stadium where the Bears defeated the Portsmouth Spartans, 9–0. Zero weather and a blizzard made playing conditions at Wrigley Field impossible and forced the game indoors on a field that was only 80 yards long.

the game indoors on a field that was only 80 yards long.

Twice the two teams had played to ties during the regular season and for three periods it seemed they were destined to play a third, this one scoreless. But then Dick Nesbitt intercepted a pass and ran to the Spartans' 7-yard line.

From there Nagurski slammed into the line for 6 yards, only to be stopped cold in his tracks on his next two thrusts. On fourth down he faked another plunge, straightened, and tossed a little pass to Grange for a touchdown. Later the Bears scored 2 more points on a safety, but the Spartans never quite forgave them that touchdown. They'll argue to this day that Nagurski wasn't 5 yards behind the line of scrimmage, as the rules required, when he threw his pass.

At any rate, the rule was amended before another season rolled around, making it legal to throw a pass

from any point behind the line of scrimmage. Pro football at last had taken the step that was to revolutionize the game.

At about the same time Ralph Jones announced his retirement. Halas, who had just secured the financial backing to buy out Sternaman and take control of the team, said that he would return as coach "for one year only" in 1933. He's been on the job ever since except for time-out when he returned to the Navy during World War II.

CHICAGO BEARS, BEAR DOWN 7

BILL HEWITT's surprise pass off the end-around play was just one of the last-ditch maneuvers by which the Bears of 1933 celebrated with a championship the return of Halas to the coaching profession. They pulled one decision after another out of the fire until they were hailed as "the storybook Bears."

Twice more after the Green Bay game Hewitt fell back on his pet pass play to save the day, throwing once to Luke Johnsos and once to Bill Karr. Jack Manders' toe, so deadly accurate on place kicks he became known as "Automatic Jack," saved a couple of decisions, but no finish was more dramatic than one provided by Nagurski.

The Bears were nursing a three-point lead over Portsmouth late in the game when the Spartans were forced to make a fourth down punt that Keith Molesworth returned to mid-field. The game seemed safe, but on the play Nagurski was detected holding Harry Ebding, the Spartan end, the penalty being 5 yards and an automatic first down for Portsmouth. On the next play Glen Presnell

passed to Ernie Caddel for 65 yards and a touchdown.

Portsmouth kicked off and Nagurski brought the ball back to the Bear 45-yard line. In the huddle he said: "This is all my fault. Gimme the ball!"

Brumbaugh gave it to him on a pitchout that sent the "Bronk" thundering around his left end. Nagurski simply ran over the Spartans, bowling tacklers out of his way as he charged through the mud down the side line. By the time he reached the goal line and victory his momentum was so great he charged right out of the end zone and crashed headlong into the brick wall of the dugout. Only that could stop him.

An accumulation of such heroics in 1933 gave the Bears the Western championship and sent them against the Giants in the first play-off between divisional title holders. The game was what a championship one should be, with the lead changing hands six times. And once again the Bears wrote a storybook ending. The ball was in play on the Giants' 32-yard line when Nagurski faked a plunge and blooped a short pass to Hewitt. Bill took only two or three steps, then shot a lateral to Karr, who ran to a touchdown with the help of a vicious block by Gene Ronzani, who removed Ken Strong, the last obstacle in Karr's path.

Ronzani, a husky firebrand from Marquette who went on to coaching greatness in the league, was one of several exceptional "freshmen" in the Bear line-up that day. Manders was another. A third was a giant of a man named George Musso, who disdained protective pads.

"I was born with 'em," he grinned.

"Moose," whom Halas almost released at the season's start, remained in the league for a dozen campaigns,

winning All-League honors both at tackle and guard. Roy "Link" Lyman, the other tackle, also won All-League mention, as did both guards, Joe Kopcha and Jules "Zuck" Carlson. A backfield work horse was Johnny Sisk, Marquette's "Big Train" who chugged sturdily for the Bears for five years.

To this array was added, in 1934, Beattie Feathers, an elusive halfback from Tennessee, who rode the tail of the "Bronk" to a ground-gaining record that fall. With Nagurski clearing tacklers from his path, Feathers ran for 1,004 yards, although missing all of the last two games and most of another because of a shoulder injury that cut short his career. His average gain that season was 8.5 yards.

Many Chicago fans still rate that 1934 Bear team as the best of all. It surged through the thirteen games of the regular season without a defeat but went down in the championship play-off to a Giant team it had beaten twice earlier. This was the famed "tennis-shoe" game in which the New Yorkers donned rubber-soled sneakers to shove the Bears around an icy field, and which is told in more detail later.

Typical of the fierce will-to-win of that team was the action of Kopcha prior to the game with Detroit. Joe had a broken bone in his hand and, although he was in training as a surgeon and obstetrician, he didn't intend to miss so important a clash. Teammates, alerted by a commotion in the dining-car galley aboard the train, found Kopcha with a huge meat cleaver in his hand preparing to chop off the offending cast. "If I can just cut this thing down a bit," he explained, "maybe the trainers can wrap a soft bandage around it so I can play."

At three different times during his career Edgar "Eggs" Manske played end for the Bears, but during the seasons of '35 and '36 he was with the Eagles. In a game against the Bears he caught a pass and was streaking toward the goal line when he heard the familiar voice of Luke Johnsos calling: "Lateral, 'Eggs,' lateral!"

Momentarily confused by the familiar voice and forgetting that Johnsos was no longer a teammate, Manske flipped the lateral as he had done frequently with the Bears. Johnsos caught it and headed in the opposite direction. As he scampered away, the anguished voice of Bert Bell, the Eagles' owner, rose above the tumult of the crowd.

"No! No!" screamed Bell. "It isn't fair! It doesn't count! Bring it back! It's our ball!"

That's where Bert was wrong. It was the Bears' ball and through this bit of skullduggery they scored a touchdown.

In the All-Star game of 1936, two of the outstanding All Stars were Joe Stydahar of West Virginia and Danny Fortmann of Colgate. Both joined the Bears and through the years enhanced their reputation as two of the truly great linemen. Stydahar was repeatedly an All-League tackle before he turned to coaching, Fortmann as consistently an All-League guard before retiring to the practice of medicine.

Indeed, it was his interest in medicine that landed Fortmann with the Bears. He needed to play pro football to finance his medical education, even as Kopcha had ahead of him, and Halas arranged a program whereby he could attend medical school in Chicago while playing with the Bears. Bernie Masterson at quarterback had come along in 1934, and in 1936 he was joined in the backfield by Ray Nolting, an ideal halfback for the T because of his great speed and tremendous acceleration. On a quick-opening play he could find a hole faster than a scared ground squirrel.

All this turnover in personnel added up to a divisional title in 1937, when the Bears won nine, lost one, and tied one. But again a frozen, icy field proved their undoing, and they lost the championship to the Redskins. They weren't to scale the heights again until 1940 and their afternoon of 73–0 perfection.

Of the many great Bear players of that era one—Sid Luckman—is deserving of special attention here inasmuch as Halas insists he set the pattern for all T-formation quarterbacks to follow.

Sid wasn't a T quarterback when he came to the Bears. He had been a left halfback at Columbia as well as a fine forward passer. When he first took a look at the Bears' library of plays, he shuddered.

"Migosh," he exclaimed to Johnsos, "those halfbacks go through that line all alone. That's the most stupid thing I ever saw. Those big linemen will kill 'em. They'll be murdered!"

"Don't worry," Johnsos laughed. "Halas is going to make a quarterback out of you. Besides, as fast as those halfbacks get killed, we'll send in new ones for you."

Luckman found the new role puzzling and exacting. As he tried the pivots and the fakes and the handoffs, he stumbled, got his feet tangled, and botched things up generally. Halas thereupon decided to use him as a halfback and signal caller in a special Notre Dame box

backfield until he could master the intricacies of the T.

That took a little more than a season. He really "arrived" in a game against Green Bay in 1939 at Chicago, in which he threw the winning touchdown pass to Bob McLeod.

"I was just getting the idea of the T then," Luckman admits, "and I was still learning things about it when I quit after the season of 1950."

He had learned enough, however, to draw this word of praise from "Curly" Lambeau, who has seen them all in the pro league: "Luckman alone beat the Packers more than any one man we ever played against."

Halas says it takes about three years to develop a quarterback under the Bear system. Luckman learned the job in one. Not only that, he knew the assignment of every man on every play, and there are more than four hundred plays in the Bear book.

In 1943 Sid threw five touchdown passes in the championship game for a play-off record that still stands, but probably his greatest day was in a 56–7 rout of the Giants the same year when he passed for 433 yards and seven touchdowns.

"Strictly luck," Luckman says. "All I could think of when the seventh touchdown went in was the day in Yankee Stadium when I saw Lou Gehrig hit four home runs."

Luckman seldom carried the ball in the Halas scheme of things. He was so valuable as a passer and signal caller that the coach wouldn't risk injury by letting him run. Yet it was his only ball-carrying effort in 1946 that gave the Bears the last championship they have enjoyed.

There is a play in the Bear assortment known as

"Ninety-Seven Bingo, Keep It." Sid had been asking for permission to call it, but invariably was told the time was not ripe. Finally, in the fourth period of the title game with the Giants in the Polo Grounds, the ball in the Bears' possession on the New York 19-yard line, Sid walked over to the side line.

"Now?" he asked.

Halas nodded. "Now!" he said.

So Sid called, "Ninety-seven bingo, keep it!" After faking a handoff to McAfee, who was sweeping to the left, he concealed the ball briefly behind his back, then scooted to his right around end for a touchdown. No one laid a hand upon him on his dash to victory.

Back in 1941, when Luckman was just reaching his peak, he guided what was perhaps the Bears' best backfield, one that still contained the elusive McAfee and to which had been added Norm Standlee, fullback, and Hugh Gallarneau, halfback, from Stanford's championship team. They rolled up the yardage in such huge chunks that they scored 396 points in 11 league games, getting 37 of their 56 touchdowns by running. The team won ten games and lost one, but the lone defeat—16–14, at the hands of the Packers—forced them into a divisional play-off with their conquerers.

play-off with their conquerers.

It was bitterly cold, but a capacity crowd of 43,425 saw that rematch. There was a moment of misgiving when Gallarneau fumbled the opening kickoff and the Packers recovered and scored. But Hugh atoned moments later by returning a punt for 70 yards and a touchdown to set the point-machine in motion. At the half the Bears led, 30–7; then won, 33–14.

The championship game against the Giants was



George Halas End and Owner-Coach



Joe Stydahar Tackle



HALL OF
FAME
CANDIDATES FROM
THE CHICAGO BEARS

Bronko Nagurski Back



George McAfee

Back



Danny Fortmann Guard







Guy Chamberlain End



Heartley "Hunk" Anderson Guard



HALL OF **FAME** CANDIDATES FROM THE CHICAGO BEARS

Clyde "Bulldog" Turner Center



George Trafton Center



Harold "Red" Grange Back



Ed Healy



Bill Hewitt

strictly an anticlimax insofar as Chicago was concerned, and the Bears vindicated the fans' judgment by winning easily, 37–9.

Many of the Bears went into service at the close of the season. Among them were McAfee and Standlee, and midway of 1942 Halas himself went back into the Navy. But the Bear remnants carried on, sweeping through an eleven-game schedule unbeaten. However, it seems preordained that unbeaten Bear teams are not destined to win championships, for these Bears, like their counterparts of 1934, were upset in the play-offs. This time the culprits were the Redskins and the score was 14–6.

"Hunk" Anderson and Luke Johnsos shared the coaching burden while Halas was in uniform; and his old pal and financial angel, Ralph Brizzolara, ran the business end of the team. It was Ralph's oratory that brought Bronko Nagurski out of retirement in 1943, and it was the "Bronk," in turn, who gave the Bears a championship.

Bronko came back as a tackle and remained one until the final, regularly scheduled game against the Cardinals, a game the Bears had to win to take the divisional title. The week before the game Anderson asked Nagurski if he'd like to play "a little fullback." Would he? Nagurski leaped at the chance.

In the fourth period, with the Cardinals leading, 24–14, and time running short, old "Bronk" was summoned to take up where he had left off six years before. In no time at all he had a touchdown. A bit later the Bears found themselves in a fourth-and-four-to-go situation. Again in came the "Bronk." Bam! He had the necessary 4 yards and some to spare. Then Luckman passed to Harry Clark for the touchdown that meant victory.

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Nagurski scored the final touchdown of his remarkable career a week later when the Bears smashed the Redskins, 41–21, to win their sixth world title.

Number seven came in 1946 when "Papa Bear" himself was back at the helm. He found some of his old stars gone, but he had McAfee back and had added a new fullback in Joe Osmanski, Bill's kid brother, and a couple of potent tackles, Walt Stickel and Fred Davis. With the help of the indestructible Turner, and with Luckman and Gallarneau in their usual roles, the Bears won eight games, lost two, and tied one, beating the Giants in the play-offs, 24–14.

Since then the Bears have had their share of great players—Johnny Lujack, George Connor, Ed Sprinkle, Ray Bray, John Dottley, Dick Barwegen—but something has gone from their victory formula. They've come close repeatedly but always have lacked the "extra something" that was the hallmark of earlier Bear teams.

In 1952 the Bears were hopelessly out of the running. There were rumors of discord and dissension among the coaches and even a few demands that Halas himself step aside as head coach. George merely shrugged off these stories, kept his temper, and promised better days ahead.

"There's an old saying," he says, "to this effect—anger doth a bonehead make."

And no one ever accused George Halas of being a bonehead.

CLEVELAND BEFORE BROWN 8

THE CLEVELAND Browns are pro football's most successful team in terms of accomplishments throughout its period of existence. So brilliant is its record that fans are prone to forget that Cleveland has been part and parcel of the pro game almost continuously since football first burgeoned into popularity in the smaller industrial cities in Ohio. And in the excitement over Paul Brown's coaching achievement in leading the Browns to five championships in seven years, the fact has been generally overlooked that the coach who brought Cleveland its first title back in 1924 had a record of four championships in five years. All of them, however, weren't for Cleveland.

His name was Guy Chamberlain and no less an authority than George Halas still rates him the equal of any end who ever drew on a cleated shoe. A big man of 6-2 and 205 pounds, he had the unique distinction of being selected on one of Walter Camp's All-American teams after he had graduated from the University of Nebraska and was playing as a pro.

"Where is he now?" Camp asked when he was informed of his error. He was told Guy was with Canton.

"Well," Camp shrugged, "wherever he is, he's still a great football player."

Actually Chamberlain figured in one more championship than the record book reveals. As a player in 1921 he ran 70 yards to a touchdown with an intercepted pass to give the Staleys a victory over Buffalo and the league championship.

The next year he became coach at Canton and led the Bulldogs through two undefeated championship seasons. In 1924 Cleveland, which had enjoyed little success since the founding of the league, purchased practically the entire Canton team and transported it bodily to the shores of Lake Erie; and there another championship grew under the leadership of Chamberlain as the Indians won seven, lost one, and tied one. Chamberlain's teams had lost one game in three years!

Chamberlain remained only one year at Cleveland, which did not give the team the support he felt it deserved. The next season he transferred to Frankford where, in 1926, he led the Yellowjackets to the title with fourteen victories and one defeat.

There was considerable wrangling over the 1924 championship, for Frankford felt it deserved the title on the basis of a record of eleven victories, two defeats, and a tie. The matter was settled in a league meeting held in January of 1925 when it was decided to award the pennant to Cleveland on the basis of games played before and including November 30. This was the first step toward correction of the old, misused "elastic" schedule which gave a team the opportunity to book an extra—

and not too potent—foe in order to improve its record.

In 1927 Benny Friedman, Michigan's great quarter-back and passer, was at the helm of the Indians. But even with a home-town hero as an attraction the team didn't catch the popular favor, and the next year Friedman moved to Detroit with Cleveland dropping out of the league. It returned for an unhappy season in 1931, then disappeared again until 1937.

The Rams were born on February 13, 1937, when Homer Marshman was granted a franchise. He represented a group of businessmen which included Thomas Lipscombe, Dan Hanna, John Patt, Eddie Bruch, and Leonard Firestone. Hugo Bezdek was named coach with Carl Brumbaugh, the old Bear quarterback, as his assistant.

Johnny Drake of Purdue, Stan Pincura of Ohio State, and Bob Snyder of Ohio University formed the backbone of the team, which won only one of eleven games and finished last in the Western division. In the lone victory, scored by 21–3 over Philadelphia, Snyder passed to Drake for all three touchdowns and kicked the extra points.

The losing habit continued into 1938 when the Rams dropped their first four games. In an effort to improve the team's fortunes, the veteran Bezdek was removed and the coaching job handed to Art Lewis, a husky tackle who, at twenty-six, became the youngest coach in bigtime pro or college football.

Marshman had wanted a change. He got one in a hurry. In their first start under the fiery Lewis' leadership, the Rams upset Detroit, 23–19, on a last-minute pass from Snyder to Johnny Kovatch. They followed this up with two straight victories over the Bears, defending

champions of the division. In the first instance Snyder passed to a rookie end, named Jim Benton, for a touchdown that made the final score 14–7. A week later Snyder passed for three touchdowns, kicked two extra points, and then booted a field goal that made the final score 23–19. So impressive was Snyder that Halas, on his old premise of "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em," promptly started negotiations for his contract. He landed him the next year.

After taking two falls out of the proud Bears, the Rams cooled off, losing three in a row, but then came to life to beat Pittsburgh, 14–7, through a fortunate combination of circumstances. Just before the kickoff Mrs. Benton had given birth to twin boys and her husband vowed he'd get a touchdown for each. That's just what he did, both on passes from Snyder.

Benton was one of the finest pass-receiving ends ever to crash the pass-conscious league. Tall and angular, but not overly endowed with speed, he had what baseball players call "a great pair of hands." If he could get them on a ball, he'd hold it. Equally important, he was a master of the head and body fake and could change pace, a combination calculated to tie defensive men into knots—which it did.

In 1939 the Rams acquired a new coach and a couple of exceptional rookies. They also began to acquire a following. The coach was Detroit's great backfield star, "Dutch" Clark, who retained Lewis as his assistant. The rookies were a halfback from Mississippi named Parker Hall and a guard from Texas Mines named Riley "Snake" Matheson. Hall, in his first season, led the league as a passer and punter, was a topflight ball carrier, and was

awarded the most-valuable-player trophy. Matheson was a cat on offense and deadly on defense. More than once he sensed a play so accurately, he intercepted a pass by dropping back behind his own safety man.

With Hall, Drake, and Corby Davis leading the attack, Benton snaring passes, and Matheson anchoring a strong line, the Rams started fast in 1940, winning three immediately after the season opened, most notable being a 14–3 conquest of the favored Lions before 32,000, the largest Cleveland crowd up to that time. The next week the Rams whipped the Giants and began to sniff a championship.

Things looked increasingly bright the next week in Brooklyn as the Rams moved out to a 14–0 lead. But then sand got into their scoring machinery, and although they struck to within 5 yards of the Dodger goal line five more times in the first half, they couldn't pick up another point. Then, in the dying moments of the second quarter, "Ace" Parker intercepted a pass and ran 65 yards for a Brooklyn touchdown.

That play turned the tide of the game and the entire season for the Rams. The Dodgers came back in the second half to pull the game out of the fire, and the Rams couldn't do a thing thereafter, winding up the season with four victories, six defeats, and a tie. Typical of the misfortune that pursued them was the final game against Green Bay. The Rams were leading, 6–0, in the closing minutes of play with the Packers in possession deep in their own territory. Two quick passes from Cecil Isbell to Don Hutson put the ball on the Rams' 35 as the hands of the clock started their final circuit. With the seconds ticking away Isbell, after lining up as a flanker, took a

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handoff from Joe Laws and raced for the side line, where he turned and threw a pass to Laws, who had sneaked into the far corner of the end zone and was wide open. The kick for point was good and Green Bay won 7–6.

In June of 1941 Marshman and his associates sold the Rams to Daniel F. Reeves and Frederick Levy, Jr., who immediately hired Billy Evans as general manager and retained the old coaching staff. The team started the season with victories over the Steelers and Cardinals, then lost nine straight to finish in the cellar. Evans resigned and went back to baseball.

Reeves knew what he needed to turn his team into a winner, and he established an elaborate scouting system to unearth the talent he wanted. In 1941 he obtained an exceptionally good draft list, but the war ruined his plans. Both he and Levy were in uniform in '42 and so were many of his best players. After the 1942 season Major Levy transferred his stock to Lieutenant Reeves and the latter was granted permission to suspend operations in 1943.

The players were scattered to other teams. Benton and Dante Magnani, a good halfback, went to the Bears; Matheson and end Ben Hightower to the Lions; tackle Chet Adams to the Packers; end Steve Pritko to the Giants; and tackle Joe Pasqua to the Redskins. Clark resigned and "Chile" Walsh advanced from assistant to head coach although he had no team to coach. In 1944 Walsh became the club's general manager and selected Aldo "Buff" Donelli as coach. They put together a makeshift team that, beginning with the first exhibition game, ran up a string of six straight victories, but could finish no better than 4–6 in the league.

Before the 1945 season rolled around the coaching staff had undergone another change. Donelli now was in service and "Chile" Walsh selected his brother Adam as coach. Adam Walsh was center and captain of Notre Dame's "Four Horsemen" team and had been coaching at Bowdoin College. He picked two astute assistants—George Trafton, the cagey old Bear, to tutor the line and Bob Snyder to handle the backs.

He also acquired a quarterback named Bob Water-field from U.C.L.A., and it wasn't long before that young man had established himself as one of the best all-round backs ever to handle a football. By the time he retired after the 1952 season he had corralled almost every honor a pro can receive. He had led the league twice in passing despite the challenge of Sammy Baugh and Sid Luckman; he had led in field-goal kicking and in points after touchdown; he was among the league's leading punters and had booted one 88 yards; he had been elected to the All-Pro team several times.

In his very first season he won the most-valuable-player trophy and by his performance passed the Rams to a world's championship. The team which won nine and lost one that year had Benton and Pritko at the ends, Eberle Schultz and Gil Bouley at tackles, Matheson and Milan Lazetich at guards, Moe Scarry at center, Fred Gehrke and Jim Gillette at the halves, and Don Greenwood at full. Their title game against the Redskins, champions of the East, was one of the most unusual in history not only from the standpoint of the strange manner in which it was decided but in its very setting, which was strictly Arctic. The field was a glacier, the mercury at 8° below zero. And only someone who has sat in Cleve-

land's Municipal Stadium on the edge of Lake Erie in such weather can appreciate just how cold it can be.

It was so cold the brass instruments of the Redskins' famed marching band were frozen and, although the musicians huffed and puffed and all but blew their tops, no sounds came out. As Dick McCann of Washington wrote in his life story of Sammy Baugh: "It was so cold that the hot broth served in the glass enclosed press coop turned to jellied consomme from cup to lip."

Early in the game the Rams blocked a punt and forced the Redskins back, almost to their goal line. Baugh dropped back in punt formation deep in his end zone but, instead of kicking, he executed a neat fake and let fly a pass toward Wayne Millner, the end, who had broken into the clear. It was a perfect play except for one thing—the pass hit the goal post and rebounded into the end zone for an automatic safety!

In the second period Frank Filchock passed 26 yards to Steve Bagarus, who ran 12 yards more for a touchdown and Joe Aguirre converted to put the Redskins ahead, 7–2. Waterfield then fired a touchdown pass to Benton for an over-all gain of 37 yards and kicked the point, to make it 9–7 at the half.

Another Waterfield pass, this one for 54 yards to Gillette, made it 15–7 as Waterfield missed the extra point. Later in the third period, Filchock passed for 8 yards to Bob Seymour, and Aguirre converted to make the score 15–14 for Cleveland. And that's the way it ended.

Ironically, Waterfield's try for point after the first Ram touchdown struck the crossbar but rolled over. The goal posts had given the Rams the three points they needed for victory. In the league meeting later that winter it was decided the rule was too severe and that thereafter a pass striking the goal post and bounding, as Baugh's had done, should constitute merely the loss of a down. But that action came too late to help the Redskins.

It seems almost as strange as the game itself, but this was the last time the Rams were to represent Cleveland. Before the next season they had pulled stakes and moved to Los Angeles, leaving the Ohio scene to the Browns, who were being organized at the very time the Rams were being crowned champions.

Oddly, too, subsequent meetings between the new Cleveland team and the old one were to furnish some of the climactic thrills of future seasons.

THAT
MAN
BROWN 9

"Winning is not an evil thing. Winning fairly is an admirable accomplishment, no matter what the field of endeavor. I am a football teacher. If we win before 10,000 fans, that's swell. If we lose before 80,000, that's awful."

These words are what is known by most people in football circles and in the state of Ohio as a "Brownism." They were voiced by Paul Brown, a slender, balding man who grew up in Ohio just as pro football did and who in less than a decade has become perhaps the dominant figure in the game. These words tell the essence of the creed that has made him the most successful coach of his time.

Just how good is this man Brown, the coach of the Cleveland team that bears his name? He was too good for his high-school league; he was so good in the Western Conference that rival coaches breathed a sigh of relief when he joined the professionals; his teams made a shambles of the All America Conference; they continued to

win with astounding regularity in the National League. He occupies today the coaching pinnacle where stood George Halas, "Curly" Lambeau, and Steve Owen before him, at the top of his profession. He could have almost any coaching job in the land for the asking.

In his coaching career his teams have won 213 games, tied 9, and lost only 33. Since 1932 his teams have scored 7,059 points to a meager 2,269 for the opposition. Paul Brown is much like the man who built a better

Paul Brown is much like the man who built a better mousetrap—and, incidentally, he's set some dandies for opposing linemen on the football field. He has found that nothing succeeds like success. And so he has moved up from prep through college, through service into pro football, to the top of the heap.

Another "Brownism" is that he wants his players to have that "lean and hungry look." That's natural. Brown is a lean-and-hungry-appearing hombre himself. He was born in Norwalk, Ohio, in September, 1908, but his family moved to Massillon when he was twelve. He became a football fanatic even before he was out of knee pants. They say that when he was twelve and weighed only ninety-six pounds he went to bed for three days and even refused food because his father wouldn't let him go to training camp with the Massillon football team.

By the time he was a sophomore in high school, he weighed only 120 pounds, but a succession of injuries to backfield men forced Coach Dave Stewart to put him in at quarterback. The results were amazing.

"He was like a banty rooster," Stewart says, "full of authority and self-confidence. When he called plays, his voice rang with inspiration. The kids believed in him and he ran them like a Napoleon."

Brown enrolled at Ohio State, but when he realized

Brown enrolled at Ohio State, but when he realized his lack of avoirdupois might eliminate him from Big Ten competition, he transferred to Miami University. There he became the regular quarterback for two years, a good runner and a passer who rated above average.

After graduating from Miami, Brown became coach at Severn, a preparatory school for the United States Naval Academy, where one of his protégés was Slade Cutter, one of the Navy's brightest football stars and later one of its outstanding heroes in World War II. In 1932 Brown returned to Massillon High as football and basketball coach. He found the school's athletic system "a mess" and school spirit at low ebb as the result of repeated defeats at the hands of McKinley High of Canton, the ancient athletic rival. McKinley was then the big power in Ohio scholastic football.

Immediately upon taking the Massillon job, Brown launched a plan designed to produce a sound, long-range policy rather than immediate gridiron victories. He organized and coordinated efforts of coaches in the senior high and three junior highs, mapping and directing their programs until all soon were working toward one goal. He wasn't a "miracle man," but in his first season the Tigers won six, lost three, and tied one. The next year

Tigers won six, lost three, and tied one. The next year they won eight and lost two; and in 1934 they won all but one of ten contests. During the next six years Brown's teams played sixty games—winning fifty-eight, dropping one, and tying one. They annexed six consecutive state championships. In Brown's nine years at Massillon his teams scored 3,202 points to the opponents' 339. The 1940 Massillon team, which Brown considers his best, scored 477 points to opponents' 6.

Brown proved as shrewd a businessman as he was a successful coach. When he took the Massillon job in 1932, the school athletic fund had a deficit of \$3,700. The football field was bare and had to be sprinkled before each game to lay the dust. The stadium seated 5,000. In 1938 a new stadium seating 21,000 was erected, but it wasn't large enough. In 1940 Massillon played before 175,000 fans, including 161,000 at eight home contests. It outdrew every college in the state with the exception of Ohio State University.

During his tenure at Massillon Brown noted that one of his players, although a willing and enthusiastic competitor, seemed tired and weak. He investigated and found the boy's family was destitute. He reported his findings to the Massillon Boosters' Club, which put the family on its feet and kept it going while the boy attended Ohio State. When L. W. St. John, the Buckeye athletic director, congratulated the boy on his arrival, the kid said: "Well, Mr. St. John, if it hadn't been for Paul Brown, I'd have been down here in Columbus before this. But in a different institution."

He was referring to the State Penitentiary!

Following a vigorous campaign by the Ohio State Football Coaches Association, Brown was signed to replace Francis Schmidt as Ohio State coach in 1941. In his first season the Buckeyes won six, lost one, and tied one. The next year they were acclaimed national champions as they compiled a record of nine victories and one defeat, a mark that won Brown recognition as "coach of the year." His 1943 squad, which might have been one of the greatest in collegiate history, was wrecked by calls to military service. Playing against teams that were

loaded with service trainees, the '43 Buckeyes gave Brown his first—and only—losing season as a coach.

It was in this unhappy campaign that he had an experience that few coaches can match. His team won a game fifteen minutes after it apparently was over!

The Buckeyes were deadlocked at 26–26 with Illinois in a wild and woolly battle as play went into the final seconds with Ohio in possession of the ball on the Illini 28-yard line. The next play was piled up and the crowd surged onto the field as the final gun sounded.

Brown walked over to exchange amenities with Ray Eliot, the Illinois coach, and followed the squad to the dressing room for the usual post-game conference. While it was in progress, the referee thrust his head through the open doorway.

"The game isn't over," he said, to everyone's surprise. "You still have one more play. Illinois was off-side on the last one."

The Ohio State players hurriedly re-dressed and rushed back onto the field, where remnants of the crowds were milling around. Some knew what had happened and wondered what the final play would be. Brown knew. He already had told John Stungis to attempt a field goal. And Stungis never before had kicked one.

"There's nothing to it, John," Brown told him. "I never missed a field goal in my life!"

So Stungis kicked a placement. It was not an elegant kick. It was a wobbler that barely had the strength to clear the crossbar before collapsing. But it was fancy enough to delight Stungis, who raced into the clubhouse with a 29–26 victory, shouting: "Coach, I'm even with you. I've never missed a field goal either!"

Brown grinned. "John," he replied, "you're one up on me. I've never even tried one!"

In 1944 Brown followed most of his star athletes into the Navy, being commissioned a lieutenant and appointed athletic officer at Great Lakes, where he coached football. His '44 sailors won nine, lost two, and tied one. His next team, loaded with green youngsters, got off to a slow start, losing three and tying one, but developed rapidly to win its last six in a row including a 39–7 victory over Notre Dame for the greatest football upset of the year. The Brown magic was still baffling.

In February of 1945 Brown astounded the sports world by announcing that he would coach the Cleveland Browns when the war was over. To the unbelievers he explained his move by recalling the past.

"I'll never forget the pro games my gang saw when we were kids," he said. "You see, Massillon and Canton were cradles of the sport. We had a flat-bottomed boat which we rowed across the Tuscarawas River in Massillon. Then we scrambled up the riverbank, wiggled under the billboard, and presto—we were on the side lines. It seemed that the cop on guard always was looking the other way when we arrived."

Brown brought a refreshing outlook into the play-forpay sport. "We don't even want to look like professionals," he maintained then and reiterates today. "My objective is to have the most amateur team in professional ball."

He's not referring to his wage scale, of course, for his athletes are among the highest paid in the land. He's talking about their verve and spirit and zest for play. Indeed, Brown coaches his professionals precisely the same way he coached Massillon and Ohio State. He

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stresses fundamentals above all, but he now has one tremendous advantage he didn't have before. Nowadays he can go out and get the players he wants.

"First of all I seek a high-class type of boy," he explains, "and then I go after youth and speed."

He's a strict disciplinarian but doesn't believe in monetary fines as a means of enforcing discipline. "If the boys haven't enough sense to behave themselves," he reasons, "I don't want them on my squad."

He gave away a tackle to a rival team one year. He didn't sell him, or trade him. He gave him away!

Brown hasn't regretted for an instant his move into the professional side of football. Why should he? Financially he's run smack into a gold mine, since he undoubtedly is the highest-paid coach in football. As general manager he also has full control of all policies of the club, an unusual concession for an owner to make to a coach. And his teams have been clicking in pro ball just as they did in prep and college and service ball.

He has built a better mousetrap and the football world has come to his door.

CLEVELAND DOES IT UP BROWN

10

OCCASIONALLY AT a friendly social gathering when tricks and horseplay are in order, Paul Brown will ask some unsuspecting victim if he'd like to see the necktie trick. If the reply is in the affirmative, he'll produce some scissors and snip off the man's tie just below the knot. Then he'll launch into a discourse on football, politics, or some subject completely foreign to parlor pranks. Sooner or later the victim will ask how Paul will put the tie back together again.

"Oh, that!" Brown will reply blandly. "You know, I never have figured out the rest of that trick."

Later, of course, he always presents his victim with a costly new tie.

"It's an expensive stunt," he admits, "but I enjoy watching people's reactions."

The reactions to the tricks Paul Brown's football teams perpetrate on the gridiron are equally varied, depending on the point of view. Cleveland fans find them delightful, for he has provided the city with five championships in

seven years and has never failed to place his Browns in the championship game itself. Opposing teams and coaches don't care for Brown's tricks at all, principally because they haven't been able to fathom them. And no one likes to be made to look foolish perpetually.

Paul Brown is a football perfectionist. His players must take periodic examinations, both oral and written, and woe betide them if they flunk an assignment. They might better miss a block or a tackle. He drills his men long and he drills them hard, but when he is through, he has a polished product. has a polished product.

The National Football League made this discovery in its first meeting with Brown back in September of 1950. The Browns had won the championship of the All America Conference in each of the four years of its brief and stormy life, but the older league refused to take these upstarts seriously. "Why," the N.F.L. partisans would scoff, "the weakest team in our league could beat the best in the All America any day in the week."

They felt sure the point would be proved emphatically on the opening night of the 1950 season when the Browns made their National League debut against the mighty Eagles in Philadelphia's Municipal Stadium. But this meeting of champions wasn't a battle, it was a slaughter. The Browns won with consummate ease, 35-10.

When he had recovered from the shock, the Eagles' coach, "Greasy" Neale, said: "They had too many guns. For ten years I've been trying to get our passers to throw those long, soft passes like Otto Graham."

Bert Bell, commissioner of the National League, paid the highest tribute of all. "The Browns," he said, "are the best-coached team I have ever seen."

Brown demands three things—speed, condition, and consistent execution of fundamentals. As Jack Clowser, Cleveland sports writer, once phrased it: "Brown insists his team maintain the condition of galley oarsmen, the speed of track athletes, and the spirit of young businessmen who believe in their careers."

It has proved a most effective formula.

Arthur B. "Mickey" McBride was one of the first to appreciate it, signing Brown as coach of his new Cleveland professional team a year before it even came into being. Brown was still in the Navy at the time, but McBride got his signature on a five-year contract by assuring him a good salary plus a percentage of the club's profits, and by agreeing to pay him \$1,000 a month for the rest of the time he spent in service.

Brown immediately began lining up players for the team that was to bear his name and the stamp of his coaching genius. He picked according to his formula which stresses speed, and he selected largely from among players he knew through personal contact either at Massillon, Ohio State, or in the service. He also picked without regard to the All America Conference edict prohibiting the signing of players with college eligibility remaining or those under contract to National League teams. Brown staged heavy raids on both these sources of talent.

Ohio State still hasn't forgiven him for putting the snatch on Lou Groza, Lin Houston, Dante Lavelli, and Gene Fekete—all of whom had periods of eligibility remaining. The National League was shocked when he grabbed such stars as Lou Rymkus and Edgar "Special Delivery" Jones, and it was flabbergasted when he took

Chet Adams, Moe Scarry, Don Greenwood, and Tom Colella from the Rams just after they had won a championship for Cleveland.

Brown had some bits of luck, too. The contract of an end from Utah named Mac Speedie came in on a piece of brown paper, but although the document wasn't fancy, Mr. Speedie was. He became one of the best pass catchers.

Of even greater importance, however, was Brown's refusal to heed the advice of one of the nation's foremost college coaches who tried to persuade him not to sign Otto Graham. The handsome Graham had been an All-American tailback at Northwestern, but Brown envisioned him as a T-formation quarterback, the basic art of which he had mastered while at North Carolina Pre-Flight.

"He is first of all a great passer," said Brown of Graham, but more than that he has a good channel of thought; he has the peripheral vision; and he's the type of fellow personally who will create team spirit on the ball club."

The estimate was accurate to the *n*th degree. Graham became the backbone of the Browns with his clever field generalship, his passing, and his running. For three years he was the All America's top passer, and each year Speedie was its leading receiver. In the only other year of the A.A.C.'s existence, Lavelli was the leading pass receiver and the man who threw to him, of course, was Graham.

Fans called Speedie and Lavelli "the touchdown twins" and compared them with the incomparable Don Hutson of Green Bay, but as some sage observed, each had a little bit more than Hutson, inasmuch as Speedie had Lavelli and Lavelli had Speedie. And both, despite their fleetness of foot, ran with a peculiar gait.

There are people around his boyhood home who can

recall Speedie as a courageous little six-year-old hobbling around wearing a heavy brace on one leg to help fight a hip disease. He was given a pair of crutches but refused to use them. He had some unhappy times for a year or two, but attempted to play in neighborhood games despite the brace and even climbed onto a roof to prove to the other boys and himself that he wasn't handicapped.

other boys and himself that he wasn't handicapped.

His perseverance paid off to such an extent that, although his left leg is a trifle smaller and shorter than the right, he managed to set a Rocky Mountain Conference record in the low hurdles and once forced Fred Wolcott to a world's hurdle record to beat him. Paul Brown spotted him as a member of the Fort Warren team in a game against Great Lakes and tabbed him for future service in Cleveland.

To complement Graham's passing, Brown selected a fullback he remembered from his coaching days at Massillon High. His teams had experienced great difficulty trying to stop Marion Motley of Canton, and he saw no reason why pro lines shouldn't have just as much trouble. Again he was right, for the 235-pound Motley, who combined tremendous speed with his vast bulk, was a sensation from the day he broke into the A.A.C. With Graham throwing over the enemy's heads and Motley banging up the middle on trap plays, the Browns won forty-seven games, lost four, and tied three in four years.

Motley was one of several brilliant Negro players on the Cleveland roster. Another was Bill Willis, former Ohio State star, conceded to be as good as they come on defense. And another was Horace Gillom, a good defensive end and a punter who could get tremendous distance into his kicks.

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Gillom was one of Brown's athletic joys at Massillon, and the story is told of the time Paul's small son, Mike, fell from a second-story window. Brown, when informed of the accident, rushed to the hospital. There Mike lifted a tear-stained face.

"I'll bet you're glad it was me and not Horace Gillom," he blubbered.

Under the free-substitution rule most coaches send in new plays and information by changing quarterbacks or by sending in a halfback. Brown does it by switching guards. Bob Gaudio and Lin Houston have run marathon distances shuttling back and forth from field to bench with information calculated to do the job up "Brown."

One of the Browns' most humiliating defeats came at the hands of the San Francisco Forty-Niners in the old A.A.C. days. The Forty-Niners beat them, 56–28, rolling up the highest point total ever amassed against a Brown team. The coach was calm enough at the time, but a few hours later he hit the ceiling.

"Apparently you have reached the point," he stormed, "where you think all you need to do to win is just show up on the field. Well, let me tell you this—that attitude will be changed in a hurry. If necessary, we'll sell the whole team and start out fresh with men who really want to play football."

The following week the Browns murdered the Dons, 61–14.

Perhaps the greatest game the Browns ever played in the All America Conference was against the New York Yankees, who had moved into a 28–0 lead. Just before the half, Graham pitched a scoring pass to Billy Boedecker; then as the second half opened, the Clevelanders



Dante Lavelli End



Johnny Drake
Back

HALL OF FAME CANDIDATES FROM THE CLEVELAND BROWNS AND RAMS





Marion Motley
Back



Otto Graham





Bill Willis Guard



Corby Davis
Back

HALL OF FAME CANDIDATES FROM THE CLEVELAND BROWNS AND RAMS



Lou Groza Tackle



Art Lewis
Tackle



Paul Brown

really went to town. First Graham passed to Motley for a touchdown, then Motley ran up the middle on a trap to bring the count to 28–21. Finally Jim Dewar bolted for 5 to climax a march of 90 yards for the fourth touchdown and Groza kicked the tying point.

Groza, appropriately called "The Toe," is one of the truly amazing men on the Brown roster. He played only freshman football at Ohio State but was good enough to move in at tackle when he came out of service to join the Browns. And he probably never has had an equal as a field-goal kicker. From long or short, Groza can boot 'em, and in the automatic business of adding the point after touchdown, he hasn't missed in the memory of the oldest inhabitant. His most important kick was reserved for the championship play-off game against the Rams in 1950, a game played before some 30,000 on treacherous, icy footing in the Cleveland Stadium.

On the first play following the opening kickoff, Bob Waterfield hurled a pass to Glenn Davis, who caught it for a gain of 82 yards and a touchdown. Graham pitched to "Dub" Jones for the tying points, but the Rams moved back in front when Hoerner plunged 3 yards to the goal line for another score.

In the second period Graham threw a touchdown to Lavelli, but the pass from center was juggled to ruin the try for point, and the Rams still led, 14–13. Early in the second half Graham passed again to Lavelli to bring the score to 20–14 in favor of the Browns. Hoerner's plunge and Waterfield's kick put the Rams ahead, 21–20, and in a matter of moments Larry Brink had gathered in a fumble and scored another touchdown.

Still the Browns stubbornly refused to concede. Gra-

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ham passed again to Rex Bumgardner, and Groza converted to leave them a point short of a tie. Then Graham took over the show. First he'd pass, then when the Rams were expecting him to throw again, he'd run for valuable yardage, until with twenty-eight seconds remaining to play, Groza kicked a field goal from the 16-yard line for the points that meant victory.

The next season the Rams exacted revenge in the play-off, 24–17, but earlier in the year "Dub" Jones engraved his name in the record books by scoring six touchdowns in a rout of the Bears, once the proudest name in football annals.

In 1952 the Browns experienced their roughest season, winding up with an 8–4 record which still was good enough to place them in the play-offs. But along the way Groza had been injured and in such a way that he couldn't kick as he once did. And without "The Toe" the Browns got the boot in the championship game, this time from the Lions. And in 1953 Paul Brown found himself working for new employers, McBride having sold the team to a Cleveland syndicate for upwards of \$600,000. Dave R. Jones became the new president; other officers included Ellis Ryan, former head of the baseball Indians, and Homer Marshman, who started the Rams in '37.

THE LOS ANGELES RAMS

11

DAN REEVES admitted much later that when he purchased the Rams his sole idea was to obtain a football team he eventually could move to Los Angeles. He didn't realize quite what a job it would be to accomplish the actual moving. Too many of the other club owners in the National League considered the idea of a junket of from 2,000 to 3,000 miles to Los Angeles "economic insanity."

They still held firm to this idea in the league meeting of 1946 when he proposed the idea. They scoffed, too, when he suggested a move to Texas. That, also, they considered financially unsound.

"And you call this the National League!" Reeves scoffed. He stalked out of the meeting, tossing over his shoulder the news that the Rams were out of football. That gesture convinced the other owners that Reeves meant business. Reeves, in turn, convinced them that he meant business in Los Angeles, or not at all. So Los Angeles it was.

Even after that it wasn't easy. For one thing the All America Conference Dons, with the race-track millions of Benjamin F. Lindheimer behind them, were a stubborn rival for the hand of Southern California fandom. For another the Rams, despite the addition of such players as Tommy Harmon, Fred Naumetz, Mike Holovak, and others, couldn't recover their winning formula of Cleveland days. They wound up the season with six victories, four defeats, and one tie; and the Walsh brothers, in turn, wound up without jobs.

Bob Snyder, who had been responsible for much of the Rams' limited success in Cleveland, was elevated to the position of head coach; but the Rams maintained only a .500 rating in 1947, and when they blew their opener the next season he, too, was out of work.

The new coach was Clark Shaughnessy, the graying, somber, sober tactical genius who had helped George Halas perfect the T-formation and who had led Stanford to the Rose Bowl eight years before. 'Tis said that Shaughnessy lives in a world of his own, in a sort of football stratosphere filled with diagrams, signals, stopwatches, and complicated theory. But for a man who supposedly deals in the ethereal, he instilled a lot of red-blooded fury into the Rams.

They weren't so hot in 1948, finishing with a record of 6-5-1, but the tie game was one Los Angeles fans will remember as long as they talk football. Trailing the Eagles, 28-0, with less than twenty minutes to play, they rallied as few teams ever have.

With Waterfield pitching strikes, they scored first on a pass to Jack Zilly at end. Tom Fears, the other end, grabbed another pass a yard from the Eagle goal line, and Wayne Hoffman, the fullback, plunged over. Waterfield passed again, this time to Bill Smyth, and the Rams were within seven points of a tie. With a bit more than a minute left, Waterfield hit Zilly again, then kicked the point that made it a standoff.

The next season Shaughnessy brought the Rams home in front in the Western division with an 8–2–2 record and drew a tremendous outpouring of 86,000 to see the crucial game against the Bears. This run of success killed off the challenge of the Dons, who left the rich fields of Southern California exclusively to the Rams. But with a bonanza just around the corner, the Rams blew the championship game to the Eagles, 14–0, in a battle of rain and mud that grounded their aerial weapons and left them impotent in the fray.

One of Shaughnessy's coaching assistants in this season of disappointment was Joe Stydahar, and the events that came to pass in mid-February of 1950 opened a permanent breach between the two.

Stydahar's old buddy during the glory days of the Chicago Bears, Gene Ronzani, had been named head coach of the Green Bay Packers, and he wanted Joe as his right-hand man. Stydahar immediately went to Reeves and requested a release, explaining he felt he could not afford to turn down the Packer offer.

Reeves, without explaining that he was not satisfied with the work of the dour Shaughnessy, who was not too well liked by the players, told Joe to come back in a couple of days for a reply.

Two days later Stydahar walked into Reeves' office, fully expecting to be on his way to Green Bay within a few moments. To his utter consternation, Reeves told him: "Joe, you are the new head coach of the Rams!"

When informed of the change in management,

Shaughnessy made an unfortunate remark that will haunt him throughout his coaching career.

"Stydahar coach of the Rams?" he said. "Why, I could take a high-school team and beat him."

If possible, that was a more unfortunate choice of words even than Bill Terry's when, as manager of the Giants, he inquired if Brooklyn was still in the National League. Just as the baseball Dodgers made Terry eat those words, so did Stydahar gain revenge. In two years as the Rams' coach he won two divisional titles and one world's championship. Then he, too, was fired.

Joe Stydahar is a born worrier, but you'd never guess it by looking at him. In his prime with the Bears he stood 6–4 and weighed a lusty 235 pounds or more. With the Rams, until he took to strict dieting, he ballooned to close to 300 despite a tendency to stew and fret and bite his nails over every game. He had to battle incipient ulcers as sturdily as he ever did an opposing tackle. After the Rams had won the championship in 1951, he retired to a sanitarium where the examining physician said: "This man is suffering from extreme mental tension."

Stydahar always got a severe attack of "butterflies" before a game when he was a player, but that's an ailment common to most real competitors. His sidekick "Bulldog" Turner, even after a dozen seasons among the pros, would have to curtail his pre-game warmup because of a queasy stomach.

If "Jumbo Joe" has nerves, he also has nerve. Few players have been more fearless or rugged. Bill Osmanski likes to tell the tale of a Bears-Brooklyn game in which the Dodgers' great tackle, "Bruiser" Kinard, was giving him a bad time. On one play Osmanski was knocked cold and Stydahar, picking him up, asked, "Who did it, buddy?"

Osmanski said he wasn't quite sure, but that it was either No. 52 or No. 25.

"A couple of plays later, Stydahar and Kinard crashed together so hard the force of the collision opened a deep gash on Kinard's arm, and he had to go to the clubhouse to have some stitches taken in the wound," Osmanski relates. "The officials couldn't believe a mere collision, no matter how violent, could cause such an injury. They thought Joe must have been wielding a knife. In fact, they searched all of us for concealed weapons. They even looked in Stydahar's mouth to see if he could have bitten Kinard! That was a waste of time if I ever saw one. Joe couldn't bite anybody. Not without teeth."

"Big Joe," who lost his molars on the gridiron, made them an object lesson one day after the Rams had taken a 49–14 licking from the Eagles.

"No wonder you guys get kicked around," he stormed. "Every guy on this team has still got all his teeth!"

Then he dropped this bit of advice: "When you charge you've got to keep your head up. You may lose a lot of teeth that way. But you also make a lot of tackles!"

Stydahar, a defensive giant as a player, is completely offensive-minded as a coach. "You gotta score points," he says. "I want teams that can roll up thirty to forty points a game. Let the other guy try to match that."

With Waterfield and Norm Van Brocklin alternating in throwing passes, "Jumbo Joe" put his theory into practice in 1950 when the Rams won nine of twelve games while rolling up a record of 5,420 yards of gain with 3,709 yards and 31 touchdowns being recorded through the air.

A year later the Rams were even more explosive, topping their total yardage of the 1950 season by 86. And in a game against the Yanks on September 28, 1951, they established two single game records for mileage, getting 735 yards in all, 554 of them through the air.

735 yards in all, 554 of them through the air.

It had been predicted that the soft-spoken Stydahar would have trouble handling two such gifted passers as Waterfield and Van Brocklin, that jealousy would be sure to split the pair. But Joe never played one against the other. Quite the reverse. He had them rooting for one another. As a result they finished one-two in the league in point of passing efficiency.

The master stroke that made the Ram aerial attack so devastating was the decision to make an end out of Elroy "Crazy Legs" Hirsch. The former Wisconsin star had been a halfback in college and during an unhappy, injury-plagued career in the All America Conference. Stydahar and his assistant, Hampton Pool, reasoned logically that inasmuch as the Rams had a plethora of backfield talent, Hirsch might turn his speed and flair for open-field running to better advantage on the receiving end of passes. So they stationed him at right end opposite Tom Fears and immediately had the best one-two punch since football became air-minded.

Fears in 1949–50 was the league's leading pass catcher, snaring 84 passes the latter campaign, 18 of them in one game, both records. The next year it was Hirsch's turn. "Crazy Legs," a nickname that becomes obvious when you watch his leg action when he runs, caught 66 passes for a record 1,495 yards and 17 touchdowns. He also led the league in scoring with 102 points.

Fears and Hirsch and Waterfield and Van Brocklin

had plenty of able assistance in 1950. The backfield had power in Dick Hoerner, "Deacon" Dan Towler, and "Tank" Younger, and it had speed in Glenn Davis, Verda T. Smith (better known as "Vitamin"), and Tommy Kalmanir. The line was experienced and gigantic with centers like Don Paul and Fred Naumetz, guards like Stan West and John Finlay, and a quartet of tackles like Dick Huffman, Bob Reinhard, Gil Bouley, and Ed Champagne. In Larry Brink they had one of the best defensive ends.

These Rams were good, but not quite good enough. The season lasted just twenty-eight seconds too long. By that margin did they miss defeating the Cleveland Browns in the championship play-off.

Things weren't nearly so bright when the 1951 season dawned. Many of the stars of the previous year had retired and some had "jumped" to the Canadian league. Stydahar was left with the staggering task of rebuilding his line almost from scratch. From tackle to tackle his offensive line was new. It had Don Simensen of St. Thomas and Tom Dahms of San Diego State at tackles, Dick Daugherty of Oregon and Bill Lange of Dayton at guards, and Leon McLaughlin of U.C.L.A. at center. Two other rookie tackles—Jim Winkler of Texas A. and M. and Charley Toogood of Nebraska—were standouts, too, as was Andy Robustelli from tiny Arnold College at defensive end opposite the mighty Brink.

Such was the coaching job turned in by the great old lineman Stydahar that these youngsters, opening the way for a "bull-elephant" backfield of Towler, Younger, and Hoerner—all well above the 200-pound mark—did the supposedly impossible, with the help of some unexpected good luck on the last day of the season. Going into their

final game against the Packers, the Rams were tied for second place with the Bears, a half game behind Detroit. But as a kindly Fate would have it, the Rams won that day, while the Lions and Bears lost, and thus were the Rams catapulted into the division title with an 8-4 record.

The title game pitted them once again against the Browns, and in anticipation of an afternoon of fancy passing and high scoring a record crowd of 59,475 sat in the Coliseum. The fans weren't to be disappointed.

After a scoreless first period, Waterfield's passes swept the Rams to within a yard of a touchdown and Hoerner bucked over. Waterfield converted and Los Angeles led, 7–0. The Browns came back to take a 10–7 lead at the half on the strength of a 17-yard pass from Otto Graham to "Dub" Jones and a 52-yard field goal by Lou Groza.

Those defensive stalwarts, Brink and Robustelli, put the Rams ahead in the third period. Brink tackled Graham so hard he fumbled. Robustelli picked up the ball and carried it to the 1-yard line. From there Towler plunged over for the score.

A field goal by Waterfield raised the Rams' margin, 17–10, but Ken Carpenter plowed for a Brown touchdown that tied things up in the final period. Then in the closing minutes Van Brocklin faded back and fired a tremendous pass to Fears, who raced between two defensive men, leaped to make the catch, came down in full flight, and raced to the goal line. The play covered 73 yards and ended the Browns' long reign as pro football's best.

As the final gun proclaimed them champions, the hilarious Rams tried to hoist the mammoth Stydahar to their shoulders to carry him off the field in triumph, but his vast weight was too much and they dropped him.



Riley Matheson Guard



Dan Towler Back

HALL OF FAME CANDIDATES FROM THE LOS ANGELES RAMS



Daniel F. Reeves
Owner



Elroy Hirsch End





J. Hampton Pool Coach



Tackle

HALL OF **FAME** CANDIDATES FROM THE LOS ANGELES RAMS



Tom Fears End



Jim Benton End



Bob Waterfield

That was prophetic, for when the Rams got off to a shaky start in 1952, the management dropped him, too.

Into his job stepped "Hamp" Pool, his aide, of whom "Jumbo Joe" once said: "To my way of thinking, Pool is the best young coach in football."

Pool rallied the unpredictable Rams, who won eight in a row to force a play-off for the division title with the Lions in 1952, but this time they couldn't win the decisive one.

That was an historic game, even though it ended in defeat, for it was the last one for Waterfield, who had written so much into the records for the Rams in their football tale of two cities. He retired to enter the movies with his wife, the glamorous Jane Russell.

POTSY, DUTCH, AND DICK 12

H. G. Salsinger, Detroit sports editor, went to the minorleague meeting in New York, in 1933, to write some baseball stories for his paper. He came back, it turned out, with a football team.

This unexpected development came about because of a conversation between Salsinger and Joe Carr, who at the time was trying to salvage minor-league baseball as well as direct major-league football. Carr told "Sol" that the Portsmouth franchise was available, that he felt Detroit was ripe for pro football, and that the whole Portsmouth team could be acquired at bargain rates.

On his return to Detroit, Salsinger had lunch at the Detroit Athletic Club with Ed Batchelor and Cy Huston. The three discussed the idea and decided that pro football in Detroit was both desirable and practicable, but someone must be found who had the money to invest in such an enterprise and was willing to take the gamble. The discussion had reached this stage when the trio was joined by Leo Fitzpatrick, who said he knew the very

man—G. A. "Dick" Richards, who had amassed a fortune in the tire and automotive business and who then owned radio station WJR in Detroit.

A phone call was all that was needed to prove Richards was interested. He immediately dispatched his attorney, William Alfs, to Portsmouth and in no time a deal had been consummated by which the Spartans moved to Detroit en masse and became the Lions. With them came their coach, George "Potsy" Clark, and their great star, Earl "Dutch" Clark. The latter had remained out of football for a time to coach at Colorado College, his Alma Mater, and Richards made certain he'd play before completing the deal.

It took a man of courage and foresight to enter the football business in Detroit, where the sport twice had flopped. In 1925 Jimmy Conzelman put a team in Navin Field at a rental of \$1,000 a game for ten games. Inclement weather on all ten Sundays put an end to that experiment. In 1928 Benny Friedman's Wolverines couldn't make a go of it and became a road club.

Richards, however, was a showman, a promoter with ideas and the drive to carry them out. First he made his Lions the best-dressed team in football with jerseys and stockings of Honolulu blue and helmets and pants of silver. He had Coach Clark insist that every player going onto the field or leaving it do so "on the double." When traveling, the Lions all dressed alike with identical sport jackets, slacks, and ties.

Jim Schlemmer, veteran Akron sports writer, experienced a reaction that was typical. "I saw them on the train one day," he says, "and they looked good, so I went to see them play. They looked just as good on the field."

Richards had a three-point program for professional football, and he battled constantly to put it over. He wanted (1) a nationally-known sports figure like Grantland Rice to serve as president; (2) to improve officiating by bringing in the best from the Western Conference; and

(3) to provide good entertainment between halves to "dress up" the games as he had dressed up his players.

His first step to accomplish the latter aim was to bring in the Michigan State College Band, all expenses paid, but later he made a cash outlay of \$7,500 to develop the Wayne University Band under the leadership of Graham

Overgard. Wayne musicians still toot at home games.

Money, to "Dick" Richards, was merely a convenient commodity by means of which he could accomplish his desires. One night in New York following the 1934 season, during which he had seen Bronko Nagurski trample the Lions on a couple of occasions, he sat in a café with Nagurski, Cliff Battles of the Redskins, Coach George Halas of the Bears, and a few others.

"Nagurski," he said suddenly as an idea struck him, "I'll give you \$10,000 to get the hell out of this league. Understand, I'm not trying to buy your contract. I just don't want you ruining any more of my ball players."

With that he flipped out his checkbook, screwed the cap off his pen, and made out a check for \$10,000 payable

to Bronko Nagurski.

"There," he said, slapping the check down on the table with a triumphant gesture.

Nagurski, staring uncomprehendingly at this unprecedented action, sat transfixed for a moment. Before he could react and move, Halas had leaped up and grabbed the check. And so it came about that Richards didn't get

his wish and the "Bronk" didn't get his check—but he did get a nice raise in salary from Halas the next season.

After the season of 1939 Richards, who was vacationing in the West, heard a friend talk of a fabulous center from Hardin Simmons University. His name was Clyde "Bulldog" Turner. Not one to overlook a chance to sign a star, Richards dined and wined Turner and even spent \$200 to repair some of Turner's teeth which had been damaged by enemy heels and knees.

At this time, however, the Bears had prior claim on Turner, having selected him in the December draft of college talent. And so it was that the Lions were fined \$5,000 for "tampering" with a player who rightfully belonged to another club. Richards sold the club shortly thereafter but for several years never forgave Halas. Indeed, the Bears' coach wasn't the only National League figure who had incurred Richards' intense disfavor.

In the back yard of Richards' home at Palm Springs after his retirement, so the story goes, was a row of tombstones. Each bore a name engraved in marble. One was erected to the memory of Halas, another to Tim Mara, owner of the Giants, and a third to "Potsy" Clark, the coach who gave Richards a championship in 1935 but who fell into disfavor shortly thereafter.

Oddly, Richards underwent a change of heart when he heard Halas had rejoined the Navy in 1942. He telegraphed congratulations terming him the "finest American." When they met later, Halas said, after a hearty handshake: "'Dick,' I wish you were back in the league."

When he bought the Spartans early in 1934, Richards acquired a fine halfback, Glen Presnell, whom he wouldn't have had but for an oversight by a fellow magnate, Art

Rooney of Pittsburgh. The Steelers and Portsmouth had been scheduled for a game in Cleveland the previous fall, but a blizzard had forced cancellation of the game. Rooney sought his guarantee of \$2,500 only to discover the Spartans didn't have it.

"We don't have the money, Art," he was told, "but we'll let you have Presnell."

Rooney neglected to file the deal with the league president, so when Richards bought the Spartans he also purchased Presnell. A few months later the former Nebraska halfback kicked a placement field goal of 54 yards, a record that still is in the books. It was, incidentally, a longer kick than Presnell had made even in practice.

Richards scored his ten-strike, however, in insisting that "Dutch" Clark be included in the deal, for the flying Dutchman could do everything on a football field and do it as well as or better than anyone else. The finest tributes to his skill as a runner came from the men who tried to stop his mad gallops.

"'Dutch' looks like the easiest man in the game to tackle," said Nagurski. "The first time I tried it, I figured I'd break him in two. When I closed my arms, however, all I was hugging was some nice, thin air. Maybe he's a spook."

"Red" Grange was even more extravagant in his praise. "He's the hardest man in football, any kind of football, anywhere, to tackle. His change of pace fools 'em all. The smarter and more experienced they are, the easier he seems to slick 'em."

"He's like a rabbit in a brush heap," said "Potsy" Clark at the time. "That's the best description I can imagine of his way of running. He has no plan, no definite direction, he doesn't run better in one direction than another. He's a purely instinctive runner who cuts, pivots, slants, and reverses seemingly by instinct.

"No back ever followed interference better than 'Dutch.' But when his interference gets him into the secondary, he begins his own dervish dance. He'll get out of more holes than anybody you ever saw, and just about the time you expect to see him smothered, he's free of tacklers and gone on his way."

"Dutch" Clark could run, he could pass, he could punt, he could drop-kick, and he was as smart a field general as a coach could wish. But his backfield teammates also were men of more than ordinary skill. At the halfbacks, in addition to Presnell, who could double as a quarterback, were Frank Christensen of Utah and Ernie Caddel of Stanford, the master of the reverse play by which the Lions pulled so many games out of the fire.

Rounding out the backfield was a sturdy bull of a man named Leroy Gutowsky, whom everyone knew by the nickname of "Ace." He was as fine a spinning fullback as ever banged his nose into a line. While at Oklahoma City University he, like many other football players, had a job on the fire department. All would respond to three-alarm fires at any hour of the day or night, but luckily for both the city and O.C.U. there never was a major conflagration on a Saturday afternoon during the football season. "Ace" joined the Giants in 1931 but broke his leg the first time he carried the ball, so gravitated to Portsmouth, thence to Detroit and stardom.

To this array, in 1935, were added Raymond "Buddy" Parker and Bill Shepherd. The latter, a star at Western Maryland, had been signed by the Redskins that fall but couldn't run the length of his hotel room in the early games, so was traded to the Lions in mid-season for Doug Nott. He promptly regained his ability to run and became one of the league's sturdiest work-horse backs. Parker, dividing his time between halfback and fullback, helped the Lions to a title in 1935 but soon moved to Chicago, returning as coach years later to lead the Lions to their next championship in 1952.

The Lions lost only three of thirteen games in their first year, two of them to the Bears, who went through the season unbeaten. Each of the Bear games was lost by the margin of a field goal. And in one of them Roy "Father" Lumpkin, sturdy all-round back and defensive specialist, suffered a severely cut mouth and lip in the first half. Fortified with a dozen or more stitches and with his mouth taped shut, he reappeared to play the entire second half.

One of "Dick" Richards' methods of building the Lions was to give the club "window dressing" by including many of the city's industrial leaders among the directors. Some of the early boosters of the club were Fred Fisher of Fisher Bodies, Hugh Dean of General Motors, George Fink of Great Lakes Steel, and K. T. Keller of Chrysler. Through their auspices and the help of other civic leaders many Lions have gone on to become successful in the automotive and allied fields.

Perhaps the most successful of all these ex-Lions is big George Christensen, a Phi Beta Kappa at Oregon and as good a tackle as he was a student or a businessman. His 235 pounds anchored the line at right tackle for eight years. On the opposite side of the line during the championship season of '35 were Jack Johnson and Jim

Steen. The latter, a Rhodes scholar from Syracuse, didn't hit it off with big "Chris" and the pair seldom spoke. Years later when they met at a Lion "alumni" meeting they scarcely grunted a greeting but soon found themselves engrossed in a technical discussion and on friendly terms at last.

Ed Klewicki and John Schneller were the starting ends with the veteran Clare Randolph at center. Regis Monahan held down one guard and the other belonged to Grover "Ox" Emerson, whose aggressive play won All-League honors.

The Lions won seven, lost three, and tied two that year to take the division title, then met the Giants in the play-off at the University of Detroit Stadium on a field made muddy by melting snow.

The goo didn't slow the Lions despite the fact they relied largely on speed. They charged to a quick touchdown which Gutowsky scored on a short plunge, then "Dutch" Clark broke away on a touchdown dance. The records list his run as one of 40 yards but actually he went more than 100, weaving from one side line to the other with almost every Giant having at least two shots at him as they tried to determine which was more slippery, Clark or the ooze.

The Giants scored in the third period to reduce the Detroit margin to 13–7 when Danowski passed to Strong, but the Lions scored twice in the fourth period to make the final score 26–7. First George Christensen blocked a punt to set up a touchdown dash by Caddel, and then Parker charged 9 yards for the other tally after intercepting a pass and returning it 23 yards.

The following year the Lions, their backfield super-

charged with fine runners, rushed for a total of 2,885 yards, a record that still stands and is matched only remotely by their own 2,763 yards in 1934. But things began to go wrong for the boys in blue and silver in the All-Star game and kept getting worse until they wound up with an 8–4 record in 1936.

"Dutch" Clark's running was the more amazing when it is taken into consideration he was almost totally blind in the left eye. This affliction handicapped him greatly in the All-Star game that year, for he never had played in a night game before and the lights blinded him completely at times. One such occasion came in the fourth period when the Lions, losing 7–0, were on about the Collegians' 10-yard line and needed a touchdown and the conversion to salvage their prestige.

conversion to salvage their prestige.

Clark couldn't see to throw a pass, so he called on the old reliable Caddel reverse. Faking a run up the middle himself, he handed off the ball behind his back to

dle himself, he handed off the ball behind his back to Caddel, who swept around the All-Star right end for a touchdown. Then "Dutch," still blinking in the glare of the lights and unable to see the goal posts, drop-kicked the ball squarely between them for the tying point.

That was typical of "Dutch's" ability under pressure, so Richards, determined on a coaching change in 1937, made it as minor a one as possible, altering only the coach's first name. "Dutch" replaced "Potsy" at the helm and suddenly found himself possessed of a personal press agent. He had been a pro since 1931 and was acknowledged one of the finest players in football history, yet he always had shunned the limelight, so Richards, determined to glamorize him, hired the most famous name in the publicity field—Steve Hannagan. It was largely

through his own efforts, not Steve's, however, that "Dutch" was selected on the All-League team as quarterback for the sixth time.

At the very outset of his coaching regime, "Dutch" found himself in trouble from an unexpected source. George Christensen and "Dick" Richards couldn't agree on an estimate of the big tackle's monetary worth to the club and "Chris" was holding out. He stubbornly refused to sign a contract. Richards, still optimistic over the Lions' chances and eager to acquire players that might lead the way to another championship, asked Clark one day after practice, "What do you need?"

"We need 'Chris,'" said "Dutch" without hesitation.

Richards forthwith summoned Tommy Emmet, the club's publicitor and his trusted aide. He instructed Emmet to sign Christensen, but not to pay more than a certain price for his services. Emmet, always the master psychologist, told big "Chris" the Lions figured they didn't need him, that Richards felt they never had been blessed with so many fine right tackles and that "Chris" couldn't win a job anyway.

"Why the dirty so-and-so!" bellowed Christensen. "He said that? I'll show him! Where's that contract?"

And that season, his last, he proved once again that he had few equals as a lineman in those days when sixtyminute men were still the rule.

The Lions of '37 obviously were over the hill. After one more season "Dutch" decided he was, too, and retired as a player. He also quit as the Lions' coach and moved to Cleveland.

So ended Detroit's first taste of football glory.

THE LIONS ROAR 13

Gus Henderson, with a long record of coaching experience and the lugubrious nickname of "Gloomy Gus," assumed command of the Lions in 1939, becoming the oldest coach in the league and the only one active who had not competed as a professional, although he had coached the Bulldogs in Los Angeles. In a coaching career of twenty-nine seasons his teams had lost only forty-six games, but his thirtieth campaign was not to follow that pattern of success. The Lions lost five of eleven games. The next year he was gone and, for that matter, so was Richards.

His health failing, the ebullient Richards had been dickering for the sale of the Lions even before the club was stuck with the \$5,000 plaster for illegal traffic with "Bulldog" Turner. That run-in increased his determination to sell, and on February 10, 1940, he disposed of the team to Fred Mandel, Chicago merchant, for a reputed \$225,000. This represented a nice, fat profit for Richards, whose total expenditure in acquiring the team from Portsmouth was \$19,000 for the franchise proper and \$2,500 additional for payment of back debts.

The sale of the Lions to a Chicagoan met with considerable disfavor among civic-minded Detroiters, and the unfortunate Mandel encountered additional discouragement when he couldn't close a deal for Briggs Stadium and so was forced to play his home games at the University of Detroit. This loss in seating capacity cut deeply into the gate receipts.

Mandel went all out to produce a winner, however. First, he brought back "Potsy" Clark as coach. Next, he signed Byron "Whizzer" White, the brilliant Colorado star who had been the league's leading ground gainer in 1938 with the Steelers. Richards had offered Pittsburgh \$10,000 for him that year, but "Whizzer" elected to accept a Rhodes scholarship and went to Oxford, giving up his football career. He returned after the outbreak of war and enrolled at Yale but then succumbed to the call of the gridiron for the '40 and '41 seasons, after the Lions had purchased his contract for \$5,000. In his first season with the Lions he again was the league's top ground gainer and was an All-League backfield choice.

"Potsy" Clark, who had employed "iron men" in his first term as the Lions' tamer, changed his tune with the times and, looking over a big and talented squad, declared: "Men can burn out as well as rust out. This we wish to avoid. There are no first-string players on this team. Or, rather, everyone is a first-string player."

He had a wealth of tested old pros such as Bill Shepherd, Lloyd Cardwell, Fred "Chopper" Vanzo, and Howie Weiss in the backfield; Bill Fisk and Chuck Hanneman at ends; and Alex Wojciechowicz, Bill Feldhaus, John

"Socko" Wiethe, Jack Johnson, and Bill Radovich in the line. Rookies included Glen Morris, Dwight "Paddlefoot" Sloan, "Cotton" Price, and Bob Winslow.

Back in 1936 Cardwell and Morris had been decathlon rivals in the Olympic trials at Randall's Island in New York City. Cardwell was leading on points when he wrenched his shoulder. Morris carried on to win the event in the international games in Berlin. In 1940 they were teammates on the Lions and for a second time Cardwell injured a shoulder. And once again Morris replaced him.

Vanzo, former Northwestern star, who earned his nickname of "Chopper" by the manner in which he brought down opponents while blocking for his backfield mates, was one of those rock-ribbed fellows who thrive on the rougher phases of football. In this season he finally consented to wear a nose guard to protect a schnozz that had been broken thirteen times, which probably stands as a course record, pro or college. He also had suffered a broken jaw, a shoulder dislocation, and had both knees damaged, but he still was little short of terrific.

Wojciechowicz was another of this durable breed. In 1942 he underwent an operation for removal of eighteen pieces of chipped bone from his left shoulder but he returned to action wrapped like a mummy and rounded out thirteen years of pro competition before retiring after the 1950 season. He was one of Fordham's "Seven Blocks of Granite," and while in college twice asked his coach, Jimmy Crowley, about the advisability of shortening his name to Wojack.

"If you shorten your name, you'll be forgotten," Crowley advised him. "Keep it as it is and you'll always be remembered." Certainly no one who ever saw him play will forget the name of Wojciechowicz, for he not only was an exceptional defensive man, but when spraddling the ball at center he had the widest stance ever seen on a football field. A Lion teammate, out of curiosity, once measured it and found it to be five feet, four inches.

These Lions of 1940, for all their talent, were no better than run-of-the-mine in the league, winding up the season with a record of 5–5–1. One of the victories was snatched from the Bears with twenty-six seconds remaining, when Price fired a long scoring pass to Cardwell. On November 5, six players were fired in what was termed an "economy move" that stirred up quite a furor in the press.

The unhappy affairs of the season sent "Potsy" Clark on his way again, and Bill Edwards came in as coach, but the change was not for the better. The Lions continued to backslide in 1941 and reached their low point in history in 1942 when they lost all of their eleven games. Edwards was dismissed in October, but the slide continued under John "Bull" Karcis, who had played with the Dodgers, Pittsburgh, and the Giants.

It long had been Mandel's desire to lure Charles E. "Gus" Dorais away from the University of Detroit, where he had served eighteen years as head coach and athletic director, to take over as head coach of the Lions. He succeeded early in 1943 when the man who co-starred with Knute Rockne at Notre Dame began a five-year tenure in the office that had been tossed about like a hot potato since the Lions were organized. Under Dorais' leadership the Lions not only picked up but so did their attendance, a tribute to the coach's tremendous popularity in Detroit.

Sparking the Lions of '43 and '44 was the great Georgia

All American, Frank Sinkwich, who dominated the league in almost every statistical phase, winning the most-valuable-player trophy in his second year. Dorais' first Lions won three and lost six, reversing the record the next season. There was still greater improvement in 1945 when they won seven and lost three, being nosed out of the division title by the Rams in the last two weeks of the season. Bob Westfall at fullback, Emil Uremovich at tackle, and Bill Radovich at guard were selected on most all-star compilations.

The two burly linemen had rejoined the Lions after the start of the season, following terms in military service, and in a game against the Yanks in the snow, rain, sleet, and mud of Boston's Fenway Park had put to good use a few of the commando tactics they had learned.

The field was deep in mud and after Boston had scored, Augie Lio, a former Lion guard, attempted the try for point from the worst of the muck. As the center bent over the ball, Radovich and Uremovich, who weighed a paltry 260 pounds apiece, plunked their large brogans down so that mud and water splashed over the ball and into the center's face. The center, naturally, protested to the referee, who chided the Lions.

"We were merely taking a comfortable stance," the two culprits assured the official. "There is nothing in the rules

against that, certainly."

When the center finally got around to snapping back the wet and slippery ball, Lio missed the kick, but the Lions were offside, so he had an opportunity to try it over. He missed a second time. Later in the game Lio attempted a field goal but never even had an opportunity to swing his foot. The pass from center had gone astray, a mishap

that caused Uremovich and Radovich to exchange sly winks and to nod their heads knowingly.

In 1946 the Lions never recovered from a disastrous training season. Four players, including Westfall, suffered bone fractures and a number of highly touted rookies failed to live up to expectations, the result being that the Lions took such a nose dive, they won only one game. The one victory, however, was over the Steelers at a time when they were tied for the Eastern division lead, and in achieving it, the Lions stopped Bill Dudley, the league's leading ground gainer, with a net advance of 7 yards.

The next year the Lions switched from their old Notre Dame box style of attack to the T-formation, but they finished last again with only three victories. As things turned out, Mandel and Dorais also were finished. A Detroit syndicate headed by D. Lyle Fife purchased the club from Mandel and installed "Bo" McMillin as coach. The colorful "Bo" even went so far as to change the Lions' uniforms from the traditional blue and silver, but not even that could stem the tide of defeat. In 1948 the Lions finished last for the third straight time. They moved up a notch the next year, but a deficit of more than \$200,000 from those three campaigns called for desperate measures.

Edwin J. Anderson, who had become president in 1949, announced that 1950 would be "the make or break year," the year of decision. The decisions, it turned out, were all favorable. First the Lions signed two of the most highly publicized collegiate stars—huge Leon Hart of Notre Dame and smallish Doak Walker of Southern Methodist. They also secured Bobby Layne from the Yanks in a trade for Camp Wilson; Bob Hoernschemeyer

was picked up from the All America Conference; and a couple of burly young linemen, Thurman McGraw and Lou Creekmur, came out of the All-Star game.

It passed comparatively unnoticed at the time, but perhaps the luckiest stroke of all was the signing, as an assistant coach, of "Buddy" Parker, who had been turned loose by the Cardinals. A year later he was to succeed Mc-Millin as head coach and, in 1952, to restore the Lions to championship heights they hadn't scaled since 1935.

Walker had been a sensation in Texas but many felt he would be too small for pro football. Doak himself had misgivings, for he weighs only a bit more than 170 pounds and appears slender. "Everybody looked so big," he recalls, "I felt even smaller."

He needn't have worried. In his first season Walker led the league in scoring with 128 points, only 10 short of Don Hutson's record, and acquired through 11 touchdowns 38 extra points and 8 field goals. The next season he scored 97 points for third place among the league's offensive stars.

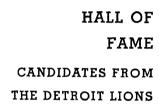
When Parker took command as head coach in 1951, one of his first acts was to obtain "Pat" Harder from the Cardinals to take over at fullback. That was the step that really made the Lions roar. Harder gave the club fullback power it had lacked but, far more important, he provided blocking that enabled Layne to become one of the league's best passers. Bobby, a teammate of Walker's in high school in Dallas, had turned pro with the Bears in 1948, but got little chance to show his ability since the Bears already had Johnny Lujack and Sid Luckman. The next year Halas disposed of his contract and not inconsiderable salary to the Yanks, who didn't have the material to make



Doak Walker
Back



Frank Sinkwich
Back





Bobby Layne
Back



Grover "Ox" Emerson
Guard





Lloyd Cardwell Back



Alex Wojciechowicz Center

HALL OF
FAME
CANDIDATES FROM
THE DETROIT LIONS





G. A. "Dick" Richards
Owner



him a standout. Consequently Layne was forced to wait until Harder's protection and a wealth of good receivers gave him a chance to prove his worth. He proved particularly dangerous because he could run as well as pass.

The Lions seemed on the threshold of a division title in 1951 until they lost to the Forty-Niners in San Francisco, 21–17, in the final game of the schedule. They started slowly again in 1952, but after two early losses to the same troublesome Forty-Niners, began to roll irresistibly toward their destiny.

One of the reasons was the return, from a second tour of duty with the Marines, of Cloyce Box, an end who stands 6-4 and weighs 220 pounds. Box was off to a slow start, too, because of his rustiness, but once he reached the fine edge of condition he scored fifteen touchdowns, a performance that took up some of the slack occasioned by an injury which kept Walker on the side lines most of the season. Luckily, however, Walker was sound for the two crucial December afternoons that meant everything.

The Lions and Rams, the defending champs, finished the regular schedule with identical records, forcing a play-off for the division title. The game was played in Detroit in a freak fog so dense the floodlights atop Briggs Stadium were turned on throughout the game. By their glare more than 50,000 people, including four scouts from the Browns, were able to see what went on.

The situation was unique. The Lions had beaten the Rams twice during the regular season. They also had beaten Cleveland twice, once in an exhibition and once in a league game. Thus, to win the championship, the Lions found themselves in the position of having to beat their two most potent rivals, each for the third time within a

single season. They proved equal to this demanding test. They eliminated the Rams, 31–21, as Harder had a field day in the murk and haze, given tremendous help by a fine line and the defensive end play of Jim Doran. Harder scored the first two touchdowns, kicked a 43-yard field goal and 4 extra points to account for 19 points.

The Lions held a 24-7 lead in the fourth period until the Rams scored twice in a space of two-and-a-half minutes to climb within 3 points of a tie. Center Lavern Torgeson promptly intercepted a Ram pass to take the heat off. In the third period the Rams had a first down on the Detroit 6, but the Lions' embattled line rose up to stop Dan Towler, the Rams' ram, on four plunges. This demonstration was but a forerunner of an even more brilliant defensive stand the next week that was to insure victory over the Browns.

The Lions were leading the title game, 14-7, early in the fourth period when Marion Motley raced 42 yards to put the ball on the Detroit 5. Motley took the ball again and started wide but was smothered for a 5-yard loss by Doran. Otto Graham stepped back to pass, but the onrushing Lion forwards smeared him on the 22-yard line. Two plays later Dick Flanagan intercepted a pass and the Browns were licked.

The first Lion score at Cleveland in the "big one" was credited to Layne on a quarterback sneak after he had shot a pass to Bill Swiacki to put the ball in position on the 2. Walker tallied later when he broke over the Browns' right tackle, veered to his left, and raced 67 yards. Chick Jagade plunged 7 yards for Cleveland's score and, after the Lions' line had repelled the Browns, Harder kicked a field goal of 36 yards to put the Lions safely on the throne.

LITTLE
TOWN
IN THE
BIG LEAGUE

14

DURING ONE football season in the small but thriving city of Green Bay, Wisconsin, no less than five women sought divorce on the same complaint. Boiled down, it was this: "Your honor, my husband has deserted me to follow the Packers. He won't stay home."

At about the same time a woman lay dead in the funeral parlors of Art Schumacher, Green Bay mortician. It was a Sunday and the Packers were playing in Boston. A phone rang and Schumacher, recognizing the voice, said: "I think I can have the body ready by 1:30 P.M." There was a pause, then the voice at the other end of the line said: "Couldn't you make it 4:30? The broadcast of the game will be over by then!"

These two episodes convey some idea of the fervor with which Green Bay—and all of the state of Wisconsin for that matter—regards the Packers, the "big team from the little town" that is one of the great powers in professional football. When the Packers are playing, either at home or away, the town turns out or tunes in as the case

may be. Hunters equip themselves with portable radios and set them up in duck blinds, for scaring away the prey is preferable to missing any of the football game. Green Bay is 90 per cent Catholic and in the churches, from the opening to the close of the football season, afternoon vespers are canceled by the priests, so no one will miss the games.

Cities the size of Dallas and Boston and Cincinnati and St. Louis haven't been able to support pro football. Green Bay, with its population of 50,000, not only has done so, but continues to do so with a fervor that has enabled the club, through a majority of the years, to show a profit or at least to break even. Back of this phenomenon is a story of fierce civic pride which has made possible the fruition of one man's dream.

The man was christened Earl Lambeau but everyone knows him as "Curly." Young Lambeau attended East High which, for seven consecutive years, had been beaten in football by West High. Then in 1916 Lambeau took personal charge of the game. With an exhibition of flawless forward-passing which later was to become the devastating weapon of four championship Packer teams, "Curly" ran up 35 points against East's perennial oppressors and swept from the high-school sports picture on a wave of adulation never quite attained by any other Green Bay boy.

In 1918 Lambeau enrolled at Notre Dame and was one of the thirteen players to win a monogram on Knute Rockne's first team. He left school in midyear in order to undergo an operation at home and never returned to the campus. He had been working for many months for the Indian Packing Company, and his boss, Frank Peck,

offered him \$250 a month to remain with the firm rather than resume his college career.

"That was more money than I thought there was in the world," says "Curly," "so I stayed."

As the football season neared, Lambeau felt the old urge to play. He mentioned it to Peck, saying: "There must be a lot of fellows around who feel the same way I do. Why don't you provide us with uniforms? We could call ourselves the Packers. It would be good advertising."

"How much would it cost to outfit a club?" Peck asked. Lambeau allowed that according to his figures it could be done nicely on \$500. Peck agreed to back him to that amount, so "Curly," aided by the sports editor of the *Press-Gazette*, George Calhoun, set about lining up players from the area, among them Henry "Tubby" Bero and Jimmy Coffeen.

"Everybody played at least fifty minutes," Lambeau recalls. "Oh, we did carry a couple of substitutes just in case somebody got killed or something, but most of the time all the subs did was pass the hat. We didn't have a fence around the field and couldn't charge admission, so we chiseled from the crowd. We put each gate into a bag and stowed it in a safe. At the end of the season we split the pot. We each got \$16.50."

That wasn't enough to enable "Tubby" Bero to pay for some bridgework that was loosened, the bill for the dental repairs amounting to \$60. Nevertheless, he willingly agreed to play the next season.

The Packers that first year all but played themselves out of opposition. They rolled up tremendous scores against teams from Marinette, Menominee, Sheboygan, and other nearby cities, winning ten of eleven games and scoring 565 points to 18 for the enemy. They were beaten for the state title, however, by the Beloit Fairies, 6–0, in a game played at Beloit. Twice in one series of downs from close in, Lambeau crossed the Beloit goal line, and on another occasion he apparently tallied on a long run, but each time the play was nullified by a penalty. Calhoun still insists the penalties were not justified.

The team continued to prosper on the field in '20, and in '21 it became a member of the league, the franchise being held by J. E. Clair of the Acme Packing Co., but during the course of a season in which the team won three and lost seven, it was charged the Packers had used some ineligible players, so President Joe Carr ordered Clair to return the franchise to the league.

Lambeau was discouraged but undaunted. He determined to secure the franchise himself at the meeting in June of 1922 in the Hollenden Hotel, Cleveland, but there was one hitch. He had the \$50 required for the franchise, but he lacked the money to pay for transportation to Cleveland. Word of his plight came to his friend Don Murphy. Now Don was proud of his new Marmon automobile, but he was even prouder of the Packer football team; so he sold the Marmon for \$1,500, and he and "Curly" set off together, returning with the franchise.

Murphy's reward was permission to appear in a Packer game. He wasn't a football player, but he was issued a uniform, was in the opening game for the kickoff and one play, in which he chanced to help make the tackle. He then retired to his role of fan.

One rainy Sunday late that fall Lambeau and a friend, Joe Ordens, who had tried to make ends meet out of their own pockets, were about ready to give up and call it quits. The team owed \$1,600 in back pay, and the cold rain that was pouring down meant only a handful of fans would turn out for the game with the Duluth Eskimos. They were talking over the advisability of canceling the game when into the room walked Andy Turnbull, publisher of the *Press-Gazette*. He advised Lambeau to play the game, pointing out it would be a fatal error to call it off. So the Packers played and won a ball game, but lost more money.

Had that game been canceled, the Packers probably would have died in infancy. As it was, Publisher Turnbull became more interested than ever. Later in the week he called a meeting of civic leaders to discuss the team's future. A loan of \$2,500 was arranged to take care of the club's outstanding debts, and for operating the Packers in the season of 1923, the Green Bay Football Corporation was founded with Turnbull as president. Stock was sold at \$5.00 a share and each purchaser was given a box seat. Before the club played the opening game in '23 there was \$5,000 in the treasury and more than five hundred stockholders.

Leaders in this drive to save the Packers became known as "The Hungry Five." In addition to Lambeau and Turnbull, they were Dr. W. W. Kelly, Lee Joannes, and Gerry Clifford. Joannes served as president for many years before becoming chairman of the board.

In two years following the formation of the corporation, all indebtedness had been wiped away. And from a squad of fourteen men in 1923, Lambeau felt free to increase his personnel. Until that time the talent had been largely local, the one outsider being Howard "Cub" Buck, mighty tackle and field-goal kicker from the University of Wisconsin, who was paid the crushing sum of \$150 a game.

As a matter of fact, Lambeau's sense of humor almost cost him Buck's services at any price. When "Curly" went to talk contract with Buck, he found the big fellow playing a part in an amateur theatrical. "Curly" laughed out loud when he came on stage. "Cub" located the source of the merriment and subsequently gave Lambeau some tragic moments before agreeing to sign.

Jerry Corcoran, who ran the old Columbus Panhandles, tells one classic story about Buck and the rainy afternoon when he kicked a phantom field goal to give Green Bay a 3–0 decision.

"It was so dark you could hardly see the players on the field," Corcoran chuckles, "and it was raining cats and dogs. Buck went back to kick and the officials signaled he had made it. The game ended a moment later. I didn't see the ball go over the crossbar, but it was so dark and dismal I wasn't surprised about that. I figured the officials were in position to see. In fact, I had almost forgotten the incident until one day years later when I encountered Buck.

"Funny thing about that,' Buck told me. 'I'll let you in on a little secret. The kick was never kicked! The center merely went through the motion of passing the ball back, the quarterback made believe he caught it and set it down, and I went through the motions of kicking. Actually, the ball never left the center's hands!"

One of the first players brought in from "outside" was Francis Earp, a center from Monmouth College who had played with the Rock Island Independents. He was nicknamed "Jugger" or simply "Jug" as a shortening for "Juggernaut," which he certainly was. And like many another Packer who came along later, Earp remained in Green Bay. Today he keeps close to the team by serving as its publicity director.

Lambeau always made it a point to hire players who would enjoy life in a small town. The questionnaire he prepared to send to prospective players invariably asked: "How much a month does it cost you to live?" Preference was given to lads with more conservative tastes.

Don Hutson, "Lavvie" Dilweg, Verne Lewellen, Ted Fritsch, Arnie Herber, Joe Laws, Charley Brock, "Boob" Darling, Tony Canadeo—these are but a few of the Packers who remained in Green Bay or environs after putting away their football pads. Dilweg and Lewellen were rivals for election as district attorney at a time when they were teammates on the Packers. In election week they flipped a coin to see which would have his picture on the cover of the game program.

The town of Green Bay all but packs the Packers away in moth balls nightly. It sees to it they're in bed early and at practice on time. From August 1 until Christmas, the Packers come first and business second.

There was a brief period just after World War II when this wasn't quite the case, however. Lambeau at that time arranged the purchase of Rockwood Lodge, an elaborate place on a 100-acre tract overlooking the waters of Green Bay, but well removed from town. The players lived and ate there, and in consequence the townsfolk saw but little of them in comparison with the old days. Still, although it divorced the team from the town to some extent until it was destroyed by fire in 1950, Rockwood Lodge

helped save the Packers during the war between the leagues.

When the moneyed men of the All America Conference and National League began trying to outbid one another for talent, Green Bay was at a great disadvantage. A spectator fell from the grandstand in 1933 and a resultant lawsuit had forced the club to reorganize and conduct another drive for money among the citizens. Rallying from that, the Packers were substantially on their feet when the All America Conference threat developed, but they were not so wealthy they could afford to throw money around promiscuously.

It was in this crisis that Lambeau tried to sell prospective players on Rockwood Lodge. He'd point out how costly it was to live in hotels in big cities and to eat in restaurants. At Rockwood the player lived and ate at the club's expense from the start of training until the end of the season. Why, a boy could save a fortune that way, even if his weekly wage was less than it might be elsewhere!

Indeed, 'tis said that Walt Schlinkman, a good full-back, almost did. He was a lad who shunned the bright lights and whose dissipation consisted of an occasional movie. During the season he would live at Rockwood and draw only about a dollar a day from his pay for incidental expenses. The rest went into his sock.

The lure of big salaries available elsewhere cost the Packers many of the "name" players they had drawn in the draft but whom they couldn't afford at the market price. And as the Packers fell into losing ways, friction began to develop between Lambeau and the executive committee headed by President Emil R. Fischer. The

trouble was intensified when Lambeau brought in George Strickler, able Chicago newspaperman and former publicity director for the league, to replace Calhoun, who was in poor health.

The schism grew wider and wider until in February, 1950, Lambeau resigned, saying he could not subscribe to the policies under which the team was being operated. And as he departed, Gerry Clifford, who had been closely allied with "Curly" through his thirty-one years with the team, said: "If Lambeau had stayed for two more years, we would have gone completely busted."

But regardless of what opinions Green Bay has of Lambeau today—and they're myriad—the fact remains that he made the Packers, the most unique team in bigtime sports history.

GREEN BAY DRAWS BLOOD 15

IN THE FIRST YEAR of the Packers' existence "Curly" Lambeau learned a lesson that was, in a way, to revolutionize the game of football. Green Bay was cast against Iron Mountain, and the players might better have been casting themselves against an iron mountain than against the players representing the town. One after another of the Packer backfield men was injured and the limited supply was running dangerously low. Lambeau promptly decided to take to the air lanes rather than to run the team to death along the ground.

"Why beat your brains out running against a pro line," he reasoned, "when you can throw the football around and save your players? It's better business to pass the ball. And better show business, too."

Thus did Lambeau reverse his field. The normal football offense up to that moment consisted of a strong running attack supplemented by passing. Lambeau made passing his basic attack and supplemented it with running. The results were revolutionary.

"Curly" also was one of the first coaches to do his job from the rooftops, or from somewhere approximating that location. He would station himself in the upper deck of the grandstand and run his club through telephonic communication with the bench. Not infrequently he would punctuate his directives with explosions such as the one he shouted to "Red" Smith, his assistant.

"No, no, no not that" he screamed. "Do you realize, Smith, that you are losing the game?"

It is a matter of dispute whether he or George Halas originated the business of scouting from the upper deck, but there can be no argument as to which was the more embarrassed by it. Lambeau won the honors hands down.

The incident occurred in New York. The Packers were playing the Giants and Lambeau decided his place was in the press box which, at the Polo Grounds, is a goodly hike if you're not a mountain goat or something akin thereto. The clubhouse, just off street level, is a far cry from the eagles' perch beneath the roof, but "Curly" decided he should watch the first half from high aloft, then dash to the dressing room with information that would make the second half easy for the Packers. To insure his making the trip on schedule, he even timed himself. He clocked the journey in four minutes flat, then allowed himself five minutes just on the off chance he'd get caught in the crowds making for the rest rooms or refreshment stands.

His strategy was perfect except for one small flaw—he got lost en route. Jammed in the milling throng he reached ground level far behind schedule. Worse, he found the exit door locked. By the time he could locate a policeman, approach the clubhouse from outside the park, and have

himself hoisted so he could look into the barred window, he had time only to deliver the shortest half-time speech of his career. "Good luck, fellows," he shouted to his Packers as they trooped back onto the playing field.

Probably only one coach had a more disheartening experience with second-story involvements. That was "Lone Star" Dietz. The astute Indian sent his Boston Redskins against the Giants one afternoon and had determined that the best strategy would be to kick off and then try to take possession of the ball deep in Giant territory.

In pre-game discussion he gave explicit instructions for the Redskins to kick off. Then he trotted off the field and started his climb to a box in the upper deck which had been wired for sound. As he reached it and looked down upon the field, he saw his men lined up in receiving formation. Quickly he grabbed the phone.

formation. Quickly he grabbed the phone.

"I told you to kick," he barked. "What the hell's the matter with you? Don't receive kick!"

As he paused for breath he heard the voice of his assistant on the bench saying: "We did kick. The score is 7-0. Harry Newman ran the kick back 94 yards!"

Lambeau, for all his inventive talents and football instinct, required almost a decade to produce a champion. He did it in 1929 with a group that had as its nucleus Lewellen, Dilweg, "Red" Dunn, "Bo" Molenda, Earp, and Eddie Kotal, a half-pint halfback from Lawrence. But what really made the team was a trio he had the wisdom to acquire from other National League teams. The three were Johnny Blood, "Mike" Michalske, and Cal Hubbard. None could have been better at his chosen position and none could have been better than each one was during his career as a Packer.

Michalske, small for a guard, was none the less one of the finest of all time. Hubbard's feats at tackle and end are legend. And Blood could be a book in himself. His real name was John McNally, and he might have been one of the great stars of Notre Dame history had he not had an aversion, at the time, to academic regimentation. He took off from the campus one day by motorcycle to celebrate St. Patrick's Day as only an Irishman can. He never returned.

One week end he and another collegiate athlete who was not averse to picking up some side money on Sunday were booked for a pro contest but had no idea what names to assume for the occasion. The night before the game the two chanced to pass a theater that was showing Rudolph Valentino's latest movie, *Blood and Sand*.

"That's it!" Johnny shouted gleefully. "You'll be Sand and I'll be Blood."

And so he was Blood through fifteen years, scattered among Milwaukee, Pottsville, Duluth, Green Bay, and Pittsburgh. He had a flair for the bizarre and unexpected, both on and off the field. How else can one account for the fact that in 1949 he returned to college to receive a degree and that today he is a full-fledged professor of economics and author of a book on the subject?

Standing better than six feet and weighing close to 200 pounds, Blood was a murderous off-tackle slasher and a ghost once he broke into the open because he was so breathtakingly fast and elusive. In his heyday no one could compare with him as a pass catcher, for he could leap like a high jumper and had the unusual knack of timing his leaps so that he could catch the ball and come down running.

Johnny once won a game for the Packers with a play that wasn't even in the book. He invented it on the spot. He was supposed to fake to the fullback and hand off to the halfback or vice versa. He did neither. Instead, he faked to both, then ran for the touchdown himself.

Once, on a play starting from scrimmage on his own 20-yard line, he ripped through the line, broke into the open, and dodged one tackler after another until he had a clear field to a touchdown. But the run suddenly ceased to be fun and Johnny stopped near the enemy 10-yard line and looked around for a teammate, intending to toss a lateral pass and let the other fellow make the score. But opponents caught up with him first, so Blood, sorely disappointed, resumed his journey, carrying several tacklers across the goal line to climax what undoubtedly was the strangest run in National League history.

They called Blood "The Vagabond Halfback" and his wanderings off the field were as startling as his travels with a football tucked under one arm. A night-club master of ceremonies whom he had been heckling challenged him to "come on up and see if you can do better," so Johnny took over the microphone and panicked the house. Once he climbed through the window of a speeding train, crawled over the tops of the cars and into the engine cab, scaring the engineer and fireman half to death.

On one occasion the Packers were given a royal sendoff from Green Bay when they departed for the "big" game with the Bears in Chicago, but Lambeau couldn't enjoy it because Blood was nowhere to be found. A short while later the train stopped suddenly far out in the country, and the Packers looked out to see why the unscheduled halt in the middle of nowhere. There was Johnny Blood. He had driven his auto onto the railroad tracks and flagged down the train. The car was pushed from the rails, and Blood happily joined his teammates to battle the big, bad Bears.

Lambeau realized it was useless to try to contain Blood's enthusiasm by the usual club rules, but at times he delegated to one player or another the assignment of making sure Blood was at a certain place at a certain time. One evening in Boston, Lambeau instructed Lou Gordon, huge tackle who played for years with the Cardinals, Packers, and Bears, to have Blood aboard the train when the Packers left. Failure was to cost Gordon \$250.

Lou got Blood as far as the station without an argument but then the unpredictable Johnny decided he'd prefer to remain in Boston. Lou saw \$250 taking wing from his pocket, so swung a magnificent right squarely to Blood's jaw. Then he and Howie Levitas, the equipment manager, carted Blood aboard the train and into Lambeau's drawing room. "Here he is," Gordon grunted, tossing the inert Blood into the lap of the startled coach.

Blood and Carl Lidberg scored the touchdowns that gave the Packers a 14–0 victory in the opening game of 1929 and started them on the highroad to their first championship. They won it with a record of twelve victories, one tie, and no defeats—the first team to go unbeaten through a pro campaign since Canton did it in 1923. What made the Packers' achievement especially noteworthy was the fact that they were forced to play their last eight games on the road and at one stretch played three games in eight days with a seventeen-man squad.

Of all the victories the closest was over the Cardinals, whom they nosed out 7-6, when Ernie Nevers missed his

conversion attempt. The most satisfying were two over the hated Bears, one of which wound up in a flurry of fisticuffs between Hubbard and a Bear player.

This particular Bear, a huge fellow, was frequently embroiled in such affairs. He and a teammate seldom saw eye to eye, and once in a game against the Packers they began to swing punches at one another. The ruckus brought Lambeau rushing onto the field claiming the Bears should be given a 15-yard penalty because there had been slugging. Referee "Bobie" Cahn quietly informed him that while it was illegal to punch an opponent, there was nothing in the rulebook about popping a teammate on the nose.

The game that gave the Packers a national reputation, however, was played against the Giants in New York. The Packers had won nine straight, the Giants had won eight and tied one, and with Benny Friedman passing were rated strong favorites, especially since "Red" Dunn was out of the Green Bay line-up with injuries. But the big boys from the little town were not to be intimidated by odds or reputations. They won easily, 20-6, to capture the imagination and respect of New York's millions. They did it with an iron-man performance that saw the starting eleven play as a unit for fifty-nine minutes. Then, in the closing sixty seconds of play, Paul Minick replaced Jim Bowdoin at right guard. "Oh, how we hated to see him come in," recollects "Jug" Earp.

That was the beginning of a three-year reign for the Packers, an achievement that no team had accomplished

before and which no National League team has been able to match since.

Rolling along into the season of 1930, the Packers ran

up a string of twenty-two consecutive games without a defeat until, on November 16, they encountered Ernie Nevers on one of his greatest days. Thanks to Ernie, the Cardinals won, 13–6. Later the Packers lost two more and tied one that season, but managed to nose out the Giants once again for the title.

In 1931 they did even better, winning twelve and losing only two, to edge Portsmouth in the final standing. Two close victories over the Bears were vital to that title march. The first was registered by 7–0, thanks to a succession of Chicago fumbles. The second was achieved by the peculiar score of 6–2 when Hubbard tackled a Bear back hard enough to cause a fumble, which Michalske picked up and carried 80 yards to a touchdown.

What made the second and third titles more enjoyable was the fact that a Green Bay boy had a hand in fashioning them. His name was Arnie Herber and he had starred at West High. He had spent a freshman year at Wisconsin, then moved to Regis College for a stretch before returning home to serve as a sort of general handy man around the Packer clubhouse. Lambeau liked the way the lad could throw a football for great distances and felt he would prove a good gate attraction because of his hometown background.

The players had hung the nickname of "Dummy" on Herber and Lambeau didn't like it. One day before practice he sent Herber to town on a phony errand and while he was gone called a squad meeting. "Curly" declared that anyone who used that nickname in the future would draw an automatic fine of \$100. The name was dropped, and Herber studied diligently under Lambeau to become one of the great passers in football.

HINKLE, HERBER, AND HUTSON

It was "Curly" Lambeau's custom during those years when the Packers first crashed the nation's sports picture on a grand scale to scout personally for player talent at the annual East-West game staged by the Shrine for the benefit of its hospital for crippled children. His visit to San Francisco for this New Year's epic in 1932 was highly productive and might have been much more so. He acquired Clarke Hinkle of Bucknell, probably the only man who ever won a bumping match from Bronko Nagurski, but he ignored the plea of another member of the East squad, a barrel-chested, bristle-headed chap who asked him: "How about taking me, too, coach?"

Lambeau never has forgiven himself for that negative headshake. The boy he spurned was Bill Hewitt, who joined the Bears to become one of football's greatest ends.

"Curly" scored a ten-strike with Hinkle, however. Hinkle wasn't especially large but he was especially rugged and good. He stood 5-11 and weighed about 195 pounds, but he had tremendous acceleration and power and for a decade was one of the fearsome fullbacks in the league. Twice he led the league in field goals, once he was its leading scorer. He tallied 42 touchdowns and rolled up 3,860 yards in 1,171 attempts.

His first decision over Nagurski came in a game at Green Bay when the two fullbacks crashed head-on. Hinkle's headgear hit the "Bronk" squarely in the face, smashing his nose. Their classic meeting took place a few years later in Chicago.

The ball was in play near mid-field and Hinkle burst through a hole in the middle of the line like a cork popping out of a champagne bottle. Nagurski, backing up the middle, hurtled in to stop him. Now it was Bronko's custom, when on such an errand, to throw a vicious block rather than to attempt a routine tackle. He figured in this way to bowl the ball carrier over backward and possibly to cause a fumble. Hinkle recoiled as expected but didn't go down. Instead he flew backward some five yards through the air, landed upright with his legs churning, and bolted right back through the same hole for a touchdown run of half the length of the field.

"It was the only time in my life," recalls George Musso, the Bear guard, "when a back went past me three times on a single play."

At the close of one of their championship seasons, Pete Smith took the Packers to Hollywood to record some of their football feats on film in the form of a short feature. Herber displayed his passing proficiency by throwing the ball into a bushel basket; then Hinkle stepped up to demonstrate his punting skill. The script called for him to angle a punt out-of-bounds on the 1-yard line where a camera was set up behind a pane of glass.

On his first attemp Hinkle sent the ball spiraling smack into the glass, shattering it. But the photographers, in true movie tradition, didn't have their cameras grinding. They had figured he needed at least a few rehearsals.

Despite the addition of Hinkle and the development of Herber, the Packers slipped into a minor depression from which they emerged in 1936 with another championship. That they finally won their fourth title and were in the championship scramble for many years thereafter was due to slender, fleet-footed, glue-fingered Don Hutson, the finest pass catcher football has produced.

Lambeau found him, as he did Hinkle, during a postseason trip to the Pacific Coast. As was his custom, Lambeau dropped around to Brookside Park in Pasadena to watch the invading team work out in preparation for the Rose Bowl game. On this late December day, 1934, however, "Curly" found himself barred from the park along with all other casual observers inasmuch as Alabama was holding a secret practice.

Undismayed, Lambeau climbed over the fence, tearing his pants in the process. Gendarmes grabbed him and were hustling him to the exits when Frank Thomas, the Alabama coach, saw his plight and came to his rescue. "Curly" stayed to watch the balance of practice.

His attention immediately became attracted by a ball carrier who cut beautifully into a hole. The runner was Hutson, executing an end-around. "Curly" long had been on the lookout for a back who could cut like that, and he actually didn't realize Hutson was an end rather than a halfback until Don began catching passes in the Rose Bowl. Then it dawned on him what a wonderful target Hutson would make for Herber's passes.

Coveting Hutson and landing him in Green Bay were two vastly different matters, he soon discovered. Hutson informed "Curly" that he had a tentative agreement with "Shipwreck" Kelly to sign with Brooklyn, but that merely stirred Lambeau to greater heights of persuasiveness.

"Look," he argued. "We are a passing team. Brooklyn relies on power. You can't block and, besides, you're too small for that type of football. You wouldn't last two weeks with Brooklyn. We have Arnie Herber, the greatest passer in football, and our attack is built around passing. With us you'll be a star."

Hutson saw the logic behind those words, but said he would have to notify Kelly. When he had heard nothing from Kelly after a reasonable lapse of time, Hutson affixed his signature to a Packer contract. Scarcely had he done so, however, than in rushed Kelly, who had grabbed a plane in a frantic effort to stave off the Green Bay threat. He persuaded Hutson to sign, too.

When the two contracts, each properly signed, reached the office of Joe Carr, the smart old league president, who had been contending with such matters for years, studied the postmarks on the envelopes. Lambeau's letter was dated an hour earlier than Kelly's. Hutson therefore was awarded to Green Bay.

In the second game of the 1935 season, the Bears kicked off to Herber, who was downed on the Packer 17-yard line. Herber barked his signals and dropped back to throw a pass. The Bears converged to smother Johnny Blood, all but ignoring Hutson. The fleet rookie ran straight past Beattie Feathers in mid-field, fielded a perfect over-the-shoulder pass from Herber, and was off for the only touchdown of the game.

From that moment until the day he retired following the 1946 season, Don Hutson kept catching passes and scoring touchdowns, to say nothing of kicking field goals and extra points. Eight times in eleven years he was the league's best pass receiver, gaining 8,010 yards by aerials alone. He caught 489 passes, in all, for 101 touchdowns. He scored in forty-one consecutive games and for five years in succession was both the leading pass catcher and leading scorer. He was All-League at left end by acclamation throughout his career.

Of all his many football games, Hutson personally derived the most satisfaction from a 1943 tiff with the Giants. He caught seven passes, two of them for touchdowns, but the big thrill came from a reversal of roles that saw Hutson throw a pass for a touchdown! With the ball on the New York 38-yard line, Tony Canadeo took a direct pass from center, handed off to Tony Falkenstein, who gave the ball to Hutson on what seemed to be an end-around. But Don stopped and fired a pass to Harry Jacunski in the end zone.

Jacunski in the end zone.

The men who, along with Hutson, brought the 1936 championship to Green Bay included Herber and Hinkle, Blood, Bob Monnett, George Sauer, Joe Laws, and Hank Bruder in the backfield; Milt Gantenbein at end; and such linemen as George Svendsen, Lon Evans, Ernie Smith, Champ Seibold, "Tar" Schwammel, "Buckets" Goldenberg, "Tiny" Engebretsen, and Lou Gordon. They lost one game, to the Bears, and whipped Boston in the play-off, 21–6, with Herber throwing touchdowns to Hutson and Gantenbein, and Monnett plunging 2 yards for the other score. Two years later, with the addition of Bill Lee, Russ Letlow, and the Mulleneaux brothers, Lee and

Carl, in the line, and Cecil Isbell and Andy Uram in the backfield, the Packers again won the divisional crown, only to lose to the Giants in the play-off.

In 1939, en route to another title, the Packers were playing the Cardinals at Wrigley Field and a Chicago punt had been downed on the Green Bay 3-yard line just in front of the goal posts. Herber wanted to punt but was afraid the ball might strike the crossbar, so he called Andy Uram's number for a wide run.

"Just run it for position," he instructed.

Andy ran, not for position but for a touchdown. That 97-yard gallop from scrimmage stood as a league record until ten years later, when Bob Gage of the Steelers matched it in a game against the Bears.

The championship game of 1939 gave the Packers an opportunity to exact vengeance on the Giants. It was played in Milwaukee's State Fair Park and the transfer to that more or less neutral site created a tremendous stir in Green Bay; but a fans' move to boycott the game in protest died aborning, and the rooters from the northland swarmed down on Milwaukee in droves.

Gantenbein opened the scoring by taking a 7-yard pass from Herber while the Giants were blanketing Hutson. Engebretsen kicked a 29-yard field goal in the third period, and later in the same quarter Isbell passed to Laws for a touchdown. Ernie Smith's 42-yard field goal and a short touchdown plunge by Eddie Jankowski completed the scoring as the Packers took a 27–0 decision.

The Packers were so good on this occasion that George Halas admitted they could have beaten any team in the land, including his Bears—an amazing admission, for Halas normally can see nothing good about Green Bay.

For the next four years the Packers were forced to play second fiddle to the Bears, chasing them right down to the wire each season, so it wasn't until '44 that Green Bay won its sixth world's championship.

Bay won its sixth world's championship.

In the line old "Buckets" Goldenberg was still doing a bang-up job at guard, and Buford "Baby" Ray and Charley Brock were tremendous at tackle and center. Irv Comp had succeeded Herber and Isbell as the Packers' passing expert; and Ted Fritsch, Joe Laws, Lou Brock, and Larry Craig carried the heavy work on offense.

Once again the Giants provided the opposition in the title game and this time there was an odd twist to the script in that Herber was cast in the role of an enemy. He was rounding out a long career by pitching touchdowns for the Giants. He threw one in the title game, too, but it wasn't enough to defeat his old teammates, who won 14–7.

It might have beaten them had it not been for Laws who, at the ripe football age of thirty-three, played the greatest game of his career. Laws got the first score of the day under way when he ran 15 yards to the New York 23. From there the bull-like Fritsch thundered to the 1, then he scored. An 11-yard punt return by Laws got the Packers in motion again, Comp passing to Fritsch for 26 yards and a touchdown as the Giants covered Hutson with three men and let the big fullback get into the clear.

And so ended, for the time being at least, the championship saga of the little town in the big league. But although the Packers' fortunes waned on the field and their fortune dwindled under the impact of the financial war with the All America Conference, the people of Green Bay stood loyally behind the team. A huge deficit,



Clarke Hinkle Back



Tony Canadeo Back

HALL OF FAME CANDIDATES FROM THE GREEN BAY PACKERS



Don Hutson End



Earl "Curly" Lambeau Coach



Lavern "Lavvie" Dilweg
End



Arnie Herber Back



August "Mike" Michalske Guard



HALL OF
FAME
CANDIDATES FROM
THE GREEN BAY PACKERS

Cal Hubbard
Tackle



Charles "Buckets" Goldenberg Guard



Howard "Cub" Buck
Tackle



Cecil Isbell
Back



Verne Lewellen

incurred during the 1949 season, was erased by an intrasquad game on Thanksgiving Day which drew 15,000 and a gate of \$42,714 on a windy, snowy day.

That insured operation in 1950, but to put the club on a sounder financial footing, another public sale of stock was launched, with non-profit shares offered at \$25. The response was even more overwhelming than it had been in 1923. The Packers were saved for Green Bay.

The town had its heroes during the lean years, and the greatest of these was Tony Canadeo, "The Gray Ghost of Gonzaga," so-called because his hair was prematurely streaked with silver even before he completed his collegiate career. Canadeo was a terrific all-round player with a flaming competitive spirit that reached its peak twice yearly in the games with the Bears. Tony cried after every Bear game—either from joy or heartache.

In a game against the Yanks in the Polo Grounds in 1949, Canadeo swung wide around end and was piled up under a swarm of tacklers near the side line. One by one the burly Yanks got up off the pile, revealing Canadeo. Carl Rebele, one of the officials, helped him to his feet saying: "Oh, are you still here? Aren't you a little old to be messing around in this?"

Canadeo started away, then whirled and thrust his face close to Rebele's. "I may be a little old," he barked, "but I can see better than some people on this field!"

Another latter-day Packer who was apart from the crowd was Ed Neal, a giant of a man who played at tackle, guard, and center. He was a blacksmith and an expert in forging oil-well drills, but despite his size and amazing strength he was skilled at repairing watches, radios, and similar items requiring a fine, deft touch.

As a demonstration of his strength he had a trick of breaking a coke bottle over his forearm. One day at Rockwood Lodge, some workmen were busy trying to keep anchored in the bay the pipes which drew water for sprinkling the gridirons.

"That's not the way to do it," Neal said. "I'll show you how." Selecting some one-inch steel bars, he bent them over his knee, placed them on cradles, and fastened the pipe so solidly it still is in place.

It was Neal's very strength that was his weakness. He could have been a great football player had he not been afraid of hurting someone. Only once was he truly aroused. That was against the Eagles, who had released him and toward whom he had a grudge. Neal got into the game at a time when the Eagles had the ball on their own 20-yard line. On the first play he tossed the center into Tommy Thompson, the quarterback, who had to be taken from the game. On the next play he did the same thing, putting Al Sherman on the shelf. On the third play he upended a third quarterback and fell on him in the end zone for a safety.

When "Curly" Lambeau quit in 1950, a few days after Rockwood Lodge—the symbol of his split with the Green Bay fans—burned to the ground, the Packers again looked close to home for a coach. They selected Gene Ronzani of Iron Mountain, Michigan. Ronzani, a backfield star with the Bears and long-time coaching aide of Halas, is especially adroit at handling young men and promptly set about to rebuild with youth. In Tobin Rote and Vito "Babe" Parilli he acquired skilled T-formation quarter-backs, and in 1952 the Packers began to climb. The little town seemed on its way to big things once again.

THE MARAS AND STOUT STEVE

17

THE NEW YORK GIANTS had their inception in a protest registered by a mail carrier who couldn't obtain tickets for the Army-Navy football game in 1924. The complaint was voiced to Dr. Harry A. March, one of the most rabid early advocates of what he preferred to call "postgraduate football."

"Out in Ohio, where I come from," Dr. March told the mailman, "we have some fine professional elevens which play on Sundays."

The mail carrier was impressed. After all, he couldn't take much time off to see football and, as in the case of the Army-Navy game, even if he could afford to lay off from work, he couldn't get a ticket. "Hah!" he enthused. "Put a team like that in New York and you'll make a fortune."

Dr. March, wondering who might be willing to bankroll such a venture, thought of Billy Gibson, who managed Gene Tunney, Benny Leonard, and other champion boxers. Gibson had been impressed by the drawing power of pro football several years before when he had Leonard, then the lightweight champion, matched against Art Simms in Akron, Ohio, on a Labor Day. The day before the fight Leonard acted as head linesman at a football game between those bitter rivals, Akron and Canton, before a crowd of 12,000. The next day he fought Simms before far fewer cash customers.

Recalling how amazed Gibson had been by these attendance figures, Dr. March summoned Joe Carr, president of the National League, and the two of them descended on Gibson's office in the summer of 1925.

Also en route to Gibson's office, with an eye toward buying a piece of Tunney's contract, but late to his appointment, was Timothy J. Mara, a stately-appearing bookmaker who was one of the most familiar—and trusted—figures around New York race tracks. Because he was tardy, he arrived in Gibson's office to find Dr. March and Carr discussing pro football with the fight manager.

"No," Gibson was saying, "I don't want to buy a football club and put it in New York." He glanced up as Mara walked in and, seeing a chance to end the conversation, waved a hand toward the door.

"But maybe Mr. Mara would," he added.

Mara didn't know a tackle from a touchdown, but he was willing to explore the possibilities.

"How much?" he asked.

He was told a franchise could be purchased for \$2,500. "Well," said Mara, reaching for his checkbook, "any New York franchise ought to be worth that much."

Before his Giants were to make their home debut at the Polo Grounds in the fall, however, Mara was to discover that his investment was far larger than he had thought. He hired Bob Folwell, who was leaving the Navy, as coach, and before he had even seen a game, he had spent almost \$25,000 on players, equipment, rental, box-office expense, and the like. His first team included such players as Jim Thorpe, Joe Alexander, Lynn Bomar, Heinie Benkert, Arthur Carney, "Babe" Parnell, "Nasty" Nash, Joe Williams, Century Milstead, "Dutch" Hendrian, and Jack McBride.

Mara was a real football fan by the time he had lined up his squad. When Thorpe plowed straight ahead for 4 yards in the opening game, Tim beamed. "Isn't that the greatest run you ever saw?" he demanded, and wondered at the snickers.

The season advanced and, with but one home game remaining on the schedule, Mara's ideas of football as a means to quick wealth had been dissipated. The club was \$40,000 in the hole. He could think of only one salvation—to fight red ink with a redhead and hire the most famous "Red" of the day—Grange. Forthwith he set out for the campus of the University of Illinois, but C. C. Pyle and Halas had beaten him to the punch. Still, it was Grange who was to pull the Giants out of the financial mire.

When Grange and the Bears came east for the first time, New York was wild in anticipation. Mara printed 70,000 tickets, and despite rain only 5,000 remained unsold the day before the game. The turnstile count for the game was 65,000, and although the Bears won, 14–7, the fans were happy, for they had seen Grange run for a touchdown. Mara was happy, too, for when he left the countinghouse, he knew his deficit had vanished and the Giants were in the clear by some \$18,000.

Through the decades that followed, Tim Mara con-

tinued to maintain the Giants as a profitable business operation, and although he long ago turned over the actual direction of the team to his capable sons, John and Wellington, he has remained a tremendous power in National Football League councils.

Shortly before the clash with the Bears, the Giants had defeated the Kansas City Cowboys, 9–3. There was nothing notable about the game save that it marked the first time Steve Owen had seen New York and vice versa. They've been inseparable almost ever since, although neither Owen nor the Giants realized at the time that this was to be. To the Giants at that moment Owen was merely another big, rough tackle from the West.

Fate apparently ordained Owen to be a Giant. The Cowboys closed the season of 1925 in the East, and instead of grabbing a fast train for his home in Oklahoma, Owen went barnstorming. The junket ended in Cleveland and from there Steve and Dave Noble, a teammate, started homeward in Noble's auto. In Illinois they encountered heavy snow that slowed their progress. In Iowa they ran into a blizzard that stopped them completely.

Owen was wearing a light topcoat and low shoes. With the car stalled on a country road in deep drifts he and his pal were in immediate danger of freezing to death.

"Come on," he urged, "let's get out of here. We've got to find a farmhouse in a hurry."

Noble agreed, but he was limping because of a lame ankle, and soon he found the going too rough. He sagged down in the snow. Owen picked him up and staggered on until he spotted the lights of a farmhouse.

"Open up," Steve roared, beating on the door, and in

a few minutes they were thawing out beside the kitchen stove while tossing off cups of steaming hot coffee.

Next morning the storm abated, and the farmer hitched up a team of horses and pulled Noble's car out of the drifts. Steve left Noble in Wichita, intending to make the rest of the journey home by train, but in the station he met "Dutch" Hill, who was rushing to Western Union to accept an offer to play a series of exhibition games with the Giants in Florida.

"Tell 'em I'm available, too," Steve said.

And so it came about that a few days later Owen found himself in the Florida sunshine, playing football with the Giants. He must have played a lot of football, for the next fall the Giants purchased his contract from Kansas City for \$500. He's been with the Giants ever since, and that player pact was the only one he's ever had with them, for during his more than two decades as coach he's never had a contract.

Milstead, ex-Yale All American, and other members of the 1926 Giants gave the country boy from Oklahoma a good-natured ribbing at first, but he started at tackle in an exhibition game in Trenton, New Jersey. The temperature was in the nineties and the heat was on the rookie in more ways than one. By the end of the first half Steve was the only one who had breath enough to speak. The other players weren't in shape. Steve was, and he kept asking his new teammates innocently: "What's wrong?"

The Giants always initiated their rookies the hard way to prove their mettle. Some ten years later, when Orville Tuttle reported to the club, he slipped his college fraternity grip to "Butch" Gibson, then one of the best

guards in the business, as the two shook hands. During an ensuing scrimmage Gibson gave Tuttle a severe goingover, submitting him to all the indignities and tricks in the book. But the moment practice had ended, Gibson dashed up to Owen: "Hey, Steve," he enthused, "that kid's going to be a great guard." He was.

Steve Owen, for all his more than a quarter-century

of life in New York, is still a homely, sagebrush character with a round, red, kindly face, a lazy way of speaking, a humorous twinkle behind his glasses, and a pinch of snuff tucked under his lip. You'd never guess that this burly man who looks the part of his team's nickname, once had an ambition to be a jockey.

His father was one of the early settlers in Indian Territory, and on Saturdays ranchers from miles around would gather for marketing, racing, and wagering. Steve, at twelve, was a skilled rider of quarter horses. At one stage he won eighteen straight races.

"The Eddie Arcaro of my day," laughs Steve, who never has lost his interest in horses and racing.

Owen might never have played football if Johnny Maulbetsch, Michigan's famous fullback who was coach at Phillips University, Enid, Oklahoma, hadn't spotted him sitting under a tree on campus, munching an apple, and taking life easy. That was in 1918 and Steve was enrolled in the SATC program. He had just come off KP duty. Maulbetsch was impressed by the Owen physique. "You're a nicely built lad," he said. "Why aren't you

out for football?"

"I've never played the game," said Steve.
"Like to try?" asked Maulbetsch. "Come along."

"That afternoon," says Steve, "he gave me the biggest

lesson I've ever learned in football. He took me out on the field and began blocking me hard. He was really hitting me. I got fired up and hit him back hard. That's what he wanted to find out—whether I would strike back. That's still the test of a football player—how hard he wants to hit back."

Although one of the most successful of coaches over the years, Owen claims no strange or exceptional powers. "There is no mystery to coaching," he insists. "You must have the horses. The same coach, with material, can win a championship one season and then finish last the next year without that good material."

He has earned his reputation primarily as a defensive coach, for he introduced the five-man line and developed the famed "umbrella" defense against a passing attack. Yet he can fashion an explosive offense when he has a mind to. It was he who originated the A-formation in which the line shifts one way, the backfield another. It gained 365 yards the day he unveiled it against the Redskins in 1937.

Most teams, when they win the toss, elect to receive the opening kickoff in an attempt to score early. Owen frequently elects to kick off on the theory the other team is nervous and inclined to make a serious mistake early in the game before it settles down. Games are lost on mistakes, he reasons, and the team that makes the fewest is going to win. He wants the other fellow to take the chances, to be the gambler in desperate situations.

"The idea is to win," he says. "I would much rather win 3-0 than lose, 38-36."

Only once has an Owen team taken a humiliating beating. That was in 1952 when a good Giant team lost

to the Pittsburgh Steelers, 63-7. But even in this depth of adversity Owen didn't lose his sense of humor.

"It's a good thing I'm known as a defensive genius," he said, "or the score might have been 100-7."

Owen devised special defensive tactics in an attempt to thwart such one-man gangs as Don Hutson and Sammy Baugh, and they worked reasonably well. He always attempted to force Hutson to break outside to his left, toward the side line, so the Packer end would have little chance to cut back. He knew he couldn't keep Hutson from catching passes, but he could try to prevent his running for touchdowns after he caught them. Owen also employed an unorthodox method of coping with Baugh's passes. Most clubs concentrated on rushing the Redskin star; Steve preferred to concentrate on stopping the pass receivers.

"Baugh is so fast in throwing the ball," he explained, "that you waste men rushing him. You've got to cover his receivers closely so they cannot gain on those short passes. Sam is seldom dangerous on the long ones because he lofts the ball too high."

Owen believes in surrounding himself with assistants who are constructed along the same blockhouse pattern as he. Certainly during the years when two of his top aides were Richard "Red" Smith and Jack Lavelle, the Giants' coaching staff was the largest in football, if not numerically, at least in avoirdupois. Lavelle is still Steve's chief scout and works hand-in-glove with the boss in plotting those sturdy Giant defenses.

plotting those sturdy Giant defenses.

Early in the 1952 season when Hugh McElhenny, brilliant rookie halfback of the San Francisco Forty-Niners, was terrorizing the league, Lavelle was dis-

patched to scout the team from the Golden Gate. On his return he reported to Steve: "I've figured out a way to stop McElhenny, but I can't do anything about Joe Arenas and Joe Perry." Perry was the San Francisco fullback and Arenas the other halfback.

"Why can't you defense against them?" Owen demanded, puzzled.

"Because of the rules," Lavelle retorted. "The book says we can use only eleven men at one time. I have them all assigned to stopping McElhenny."

The next week the Giants whipped the Forty-Niners, 23–14, and held McElhenny to a skimpy 4 yards.

The sport which so many fans find too complex, Owen reduces to its simplest terms. In his book, My Kind of Football, he declares: "The best offense can be built around ten basic plays. Defense can be built on two. All the rest is razzle-dazzle, egomania and box office."

THE FOOTBALL GIANTS 18

THE NEW YORK FOOTBALL GIANTS began to assume their true stature in 1927. They did so by allowing only 20 points to be scored against them in thirteen games and then winning the crown by outsmarting the Bears in what Steve Owen calls the toughest game he ever played. When it was over, he and Jim McMillen, burly Bear guard who later became a headline wrestler and political figure, were completely exhausted. They shook hands while sitting on the ground and then just stared at each other, too weary to speak or get to their feet.

The deception that completely finagled the Bears was engineered by Henry "Hinkey" Haines, the quarterback. The Giants had halted a Bear thrust led by the mighty Bronko Nagurski only one yard from their goal line, and Haines promptly sent Faye "Mule" Wilson back as though to punt. He carried out the fake to a greater extreme by calling for a towel to wipe off the ball and cautioning Wilson not to step out of the end zone. The Bears dropped two safety men back for the expected

punt and so were sitting ducks when Haines threw a pass to Chuck Corgan, who ran to the Chicago 42-yard line. From there the Giants went on to a 13–7 victory.

Earl Potteiger was coach of this team of defensive Giants who rolled up 226 points to the opponents' 20, while winning eleven games, losing one, and tying one. One of his first acts was to appoint Owen as captain. Four years were to elapse, however, before Steve advanced into the head coaching role, and in one of those years—1929—the Giants were to come within a whisper of another championship.

They did so simply because of Tim Mara's insatiable desire to produce a winner. Tim wanted Benny Friedman, Michigan's great passer whose throws were opening new vistas in the pro game, but Benny belonged to the Detroit club and Detroit wouldn't sell him. To surmount this obstacle Mara purchased practically the entire Detroit team including Friedman and its coach, LeRoy Andrews, for whom Owen had played at Kansas City. With Friedman pitching, the Giants won twelve, lost one, and tied one in '29; but the sole defeat was to Green Bay, and so the Packers, who didn't lose at all, took the championship.

The Giants also chased the Packers to the wire in 1930 with a 13–4 record, but then slipped to mediocrity in '31, and Andrews resigned with two games remaining on the schedule. Owen and Friedman were made co-coaches for the balance of the year, one of their greatest achievements being an easy victory over an All-Star team featuring Notre Dame's famed Four Horsemen. The All Stars were the last team ever coached by the late Knute Rockne, and the game netted \$115,000 for Mayor Walker's fund for the unemployed.

Owen took full command in 1932 and Friedman moved across the East River to Brooklyn, but in '33 the Giants had another passer who was to lead them to a title. He, too, came from Michigan and his name was Harry Newman. He wasn't big, standing only about 5–9 and weighing around 180 pounds, but he was a smart field general, a good runner, and a sharp passer. Never in league history has a ball carrier been as busy as he was on November 11, 1934, when he carried thirty-nine times in a game against Green Bay. Banging your way into the Packer line in those days was hardly the way to promote longevity, so it is small wonder that Newman retired after the 1935 season, but during his brief and meteoric career little Harry placed the Giants in two title play-offs.

Anchoring the middle of the line on those first great Owen teams was Mel Hein, a stalwart as big and rugged as the trees of his native Northwest. He came to Manhattan in 1931, was named to the official League All-Star team eight consecutive years at center, won the most-valuable-player trophy once, played for fifteen years, and missed only one game because of an injury, although he passed out from exhaustion in the dressing room following the championship game with the Packers in 1938.

Owen maintains Hein was the easiest player to coach he ever knew because he needed no coaching. He knew all phases of his job on the gridiron better than any coach could explain them.

Actually the Giants came dangerously close to losing Hein before he ever joined them. Jimmy Conzelman, when he was coach at Providence, sent Hein, on his graduation from Washington State, a contract to join the Steam Rollers. Hein signed it and dropped the letter in the mailbox, then went home and found a better offer awaiting him from the Giants. Mel promptly returned to the mailbox, stationed himself alongside it, and when the postman came, retrieved the letter. So were the destinies of a player and a football team changed in the matter of moments.

Hein recalls the Bears-Giants championship playoff of 1933, the first held between the Eastern and Western titleholders, as "the fastest, roughest game I ever saw or played in."

Big Mel has reason to remember that game, for in it he almost ran for a touchdown that would have brought the world's championship to his team. Those were the days before the ball was brought inbounds 20 yards from the side-line stripe, and the Giants had possession so close to the edge of the field that only one man lined up between Hein, at center, and the side line. Just before the ball was snapped, this player dropped back, thus putting Hein at the end of the line and making him eligible as a pass receiver.

Newman, playing under center, appeared to take the ball from Hein as usual, backed up a few steps, and fell down. Hein, who had held the ball in one hand, screened from enemy eyes by the spread of his pants' seat, straightened and began to saunter toward the goal line. The ruse might have worked, too, had not Hein involuntarily broken into a run at the sight of the Bears' safety man, who gave chase and brought him down after a gain of 15 yards.

Newman was brillant that day, and he and Ken Strong executed a spur-of-the-moment play that put the Giants in the lead for a short time. The ball was in scrimmage 8 yards from the Bear goal line, and Strong started to his left on a wide sweep. Trapped for what would have been a substantial loss, he flipped a lateral to Newman, who made a magnificent twisting run across the field before finally throwing a pass back to Strong, who caught it for a touchdown. Despite these heroics, the Bears won, 23–21. The Giants, however, were to gain revenge a year later.

For the 1934 play-off classic, one of the most unusual games of all time, both teams were crippled. The Bears were without the services of the league's leading ground gainer, Beattie Feathers. The Giants were in even worse shape, for "Red" Badgro was out with a broken leg, leaving them with only two available ends—"Red" Flaherty and "Ike" Frankian. Newman's back was injured and in a brace so that he, too, was not available. The Giants were so short of able-bodied personnel that they used only one substitute in the first half. He was the veteran Jack McBride, who was playing against the Bears for the nineteenth time.

Luckily for the Giants they had a brand new passing star to replace the ailing Newman—Ed Danowski, a rookie from Fordham, who twice licked a natural shyness and lack of self-assertiveness to make himself one of the game's great players.

His first bout with himself came in his early days at Fordham at a time when he was contemplating giving up football. Major John Cavanaugh, his coach, summoned Ed to his private dressing room, so the story goes, and asked him to sit down.

"Danowski," he began, "they're trying to do a terrible

thing to you. They're trying to take that scholarship away from you. They don't believe in you. They don't think you've got what it takes.

"You've got some kid brothers, haven't you?"
Danowski nodded.

"Well, it's going to be tough explaining to them, when you go back, isn't it? I'll bet they've been telling all the kids in the neighborhood their brother is going to play for Fordham. There isn't any doubt that you're their hero. It will be tough sitting at dinner with the kids looking at you. It'll be tough sitting there saying to yourself: 'Those people at Fordham were right, I haven't got it.'

"But there is one fellow who believes in you, Ed. I believe in you and this is my football team. I'll be seeing you on the field in a little while."

Danowski was a fine football player from that moment, but despite his brilliance as one of Fordham's all-time greats he did no passing as a collegian. He was naturally a tremendously accurate passer, however, and when he joined the Giants, Owen felt he needed a jolt of self-confidence to make him realize his true capabilities. Steve made a friendly wager of an ice-cream soda he could dream up a pass play that was a sure-fire touchdown with Danowski throwing. It worked for 60 yards and a score. Then Steve let the squad believe it was all Danowski's doing.

"Ed was sort of deadly on a throw forever after," Steve chuckles.

Certainly Danowski was deadly in that 1934 championship game with the Bears. It was a game that shaped up as a battle of giants with or without the capital letter. The Bears had played twenty-eight consecutive games without a defeat, the Giants had won twelve in a row at home, and this one was to be played on their home field, the Polo Grounds. As fate would have it, this was no day for football. The mercury was hovering around 10° above zero, and the field, although it had been protected by coverings, was far from ideal. Indeed, about eleven o'clock the morning of the game Jack Mara phoned Owen and Flaherty to inform them the gridiron was frozen and the surface more like a skating rink.

Flaherty promptly told Owen about a 1925 game at Gonzaga in which he had worn rubber-soled sneakers to good advantage against Montana. Bill Morgan, who was to win All-League honors at tackle, recalled a game he had seen the previous year between the University of Washington and a team of All Stars at Seattle. Washington wore sneakers in the first half and built up a 69–0 lead. At the intermission the Huskies had loaned their shoes to the All Stars. That ended the scoring for the day.

These stories led Owen to believe that if he could outfit his Giants with rubber-soled footgear they could gain revenge on a Bear team that had beaten them twice during the regular season, 27–7 and 10–9. The problem was to find the sneakers, a somewhat scarce commodity on a Sunday morning when all athletic-goods stores are closed. Fortunately one of the more enthusiastic Giant rooters was one Abe Cohen, a tailor who formerly made uniforms for New York University and who performed the same duties for Manhattan when Chick Meehan, his friend, switched his coaching affiliation from the Violets to Manhattan.

Cohen had a key to the Manhattan athletic plant.

He could dash by taxi to the school and pick up the needed shoes, provided they weren't securely put away in lockers.

"In that case," Owen advised, "break down the lockers. I'll take the responsibility."

Forthwith, as one newspaper account phrased it: "Abe, like a latter-day Balto but using no dogs other than his own, mushed up to the northern wastes of 242d street, got 22 pairs of shoes and arrived at the Polo Grounds at half time."

By the time Cohen had returned from his errand of mercy the Bears were in front by 10–3, and the margin would have been wider had not a penalty nullified a Bear touchdown. Ken Strong had been helped, injured, from the field. For the Giants things looked as bleak as the icy weather.

Bill Owen, Steve's brother and a lineman worthy of the family heritage, donned a pair of the sneakers, took a quick jog on the field during the early part of the intermission, and returned reporting they felt "pretty good." As a result, when the Giants returned to action only "Potsy" Jones at guard and Hein were clad in regulation shoes. They had refused to don the sneakers on the premise they'd look like sissies.

What happened thereafter is known to every follower of football. The Giants, securely shod and with firm footing on the icy field, shoved the mighty Bears all over the Polo Grounds as the cleats on the Chicagoans' shoes acted like the blades of ice skates. Twenty-seven points the Giants scored in the fourth period alone to record a 30–13 upset. Danowski passed for one touchdown and ran for another while Strong, miraculously recovered from his first-half wounds, raced to two scores.

THE STORY OF PRO FOOTBALL

The Polo Grounds crowd, in the uncontrolled hysteria of the closing minutes of that wild fourth quarter, stormed down along the side line, completely enveloping the Giants' bench where Johnny Dell Isola, rookie center from Boston College, had been languishing throughout the cold afternoon, hoping for a chance to go into the game in place of the great Hein. Imagine Owen's surprise, therefore, when Dell Isola came into the clubhouse moments later with the beginnings of a magnificent black eye.

"Where," asked the startled Steve, "did you get that?"
"It happened this way," explained Dell Isola. "When the crowd came down on the field, I couldn't find you. I saw Hein was tired, so I sent myself in as his sub."

LEEMANS TO CUFF TO PRICE

19

KINK RICHARDS, who came unheralded to the Giants from little Simpson College in Iowa and who remained for seven years as one of the best ball carriers of the time, made the unfortunate error one day of mistaking the distance to the goal line. Forgetting the goal posts were on the goal line instead of on the end line as they are in collegiate football, he stopped 10 yards short of his objective on what should have been a touchdown gallop. To Steve Owen's demand for an explanation he said: "Well, I thought"

The next time he felt he had made an error on the field, he had his answer ready when Owen approached. "I guess I made my old mistake, coach," he said. "I was thinking again."

It was tough football as well as sharp thinking that got the Giants into the championship play-off again in 1935 with a record of nine victories and three defeats. And one of the victories was achieved in a unique manner. The victims were the Bears, who bowed in the mud of Wrigley Field by 3-0 after three place kicks by Strong, two of which were bull's-eyes.

The first kick, with the ball in play on the 17-yard line, struck the crossbar but the Bears were off-side, so the Giants had a first down on the 12. Three plays gained little, so Strong kicked again. This time the boot was good but both teams were off-side, so he had to try it over. This one was good, too, and inasmuch as there were no rules violations on the play, the Giants had scored all the points that were to be made that day.

Later in the afternoon Jack Manders tried a kick that would have tied the score, and Flaherty informed Owen in surprise: "Some Bear was praying the kick would be good."

"It was Joe Kopcha," Owen recalls, "and he was praying out loud right in the face of my brother. Bill was mad enough to hit Joe, but as he said, how could you strike a guy when he was praying? Anyhow, Manders missed the kick, so it looked like we had the angels on our side without asking."

Neither the angels nor Lady Luck was on the side of the Giants in the championship game, however, and the title went to the Lions, 26–7.

It was during the course of this season that Wellington Mara asked his father for permission to visit Washington on business.

"What do you want to go there for?" Tim asked.

"I want to see 'Tuffy' Leemans," his younger son replied.

"Never heard of him," said Tim.

Alphonse Leemans was a backfield star with George Washington University's football team and he wasn't surprised when he learned of the elder Mara's remark. "If you'd have asked most New Yorkers what they knew about George Washington," he laughed, "they'd have said: 'I thought he was dead!' No wonder Mr. Mara hadn't heard of me."

It wasn't long, however, before the entire football world was caroling the praises of "Tuffy" Leemans. In those early days of the player draft, most pro teams didn't spend many selections on men from the smaller schools. They preferred to grab the name stars and then go after the little All Americans later. That was the Giants' technique. Wellington Mara offered Leemans a contract in the event some other team didn't claim him in the draft. None did, a little oversight they're still regretting.

The first time Leemans carried the ball for the Giants in 1936 he ran 45 yards for a touchdown, and he kept on doing that sort of thing for eight seasons. He was one of those spirited, rugged, hell-for-leather hustlers who could never understand why Owen wouldn't let him play the full sixty minutes of every game.

"To think I'm paid for this," Leemans enthused one day. "Gosh, I should have been paid in college. This is fun. That was work."

Byron "Whizzer" White, the brilliant Rhodes scholar from Colorado who made his pro debut with the Pittsburgh club in 1938, was asked the difference between college and professional football. He pointed to Leemans.

"There's the difference," White said. "Boy, he's about the best football player in the world!"

Leemans was a fierce competitor. In the opening game one season he noticed a rookie lineman who wasn't hustling. "Crack in there!" he ordered in the huddle.

"Why should I?" queried the lineman. "I'm getting paid anyway."

"Son," shot back Leemans, "I'm going to give you a break. On the next play I'm going to let you fake getting hurt. Then you go over to the bench and get off this squad as fast as you can. We don't want men like you on this team!"

Once when Leemans was having a great day, "Turk" Edwards, huge Redskin tackle, shouted: "Why don't you run the next play my way?"

"Anything to oblige," said Leemans. And on the next play he scampered right over Edwards for 20 yards.

The Giants in Leemans' first year weren't so hot,

The Giants in Leemans' first year weren't so hot, and on at least one occasion Steve Owen was downright cold. It was bad enough, the coach thought, when the Lions ran up a 38–0 score on his boys, but when "Ace" Gutowsky, tackling out of bounds late in the game, fell in such a way he kicked the water bucket squarely into Owen's lap—well, that was adding insult to injury, especially when the mercury was nestling below the 20° mark.

After this disastrous season in which the Giants won five, lost six, and tied one, Owen set about rebuilding the team almost in its entirety. He brought in at the ends Jim Lee Howell, Chuck Gelatka, Ray Hanken, and Will Walls. At tackle he added Ed Widseth and Ox Parry. The new guards were Orville Tuttle, Pete Cole, "Tarzan" White, and "Kayo" Lunday. To bolster the backfield he acquired Ward Cuff from Marquette and Hank Soar from Providence.

Cuff was Owen's personal selection and justified the coach's judgment of football talent in the raw by nine

seasons of brilliant play for the Giants. Cuff was the unsung member of a Marquette backfield which included Ray Buivid and the Gueppe brothers. The other three had earned the headlines while Cuff did the tough blocking duty. It was his excellence at this rugged assignment that caught Owen's eye when he watched Marquette one day.

"He's not much," "Curly" Lambeau told Owen after the Giants had drafted Cuff. "He's a Milwaukee boy and would be a drawing card in Green Bay. He'd do us more good. How about trading him?"

This shrewd bit of salesmanship by Lambeau left the old horse trader Owen unimpressed. Steve switched his chew from one cheek to the other.

"Nope," he grunted. That was the end of all trade possibilities, but Cuff's possibilities were just beginning to be explored. Owen discovered quickly that burly Ward not only could block, he could run well on a reverse play. Steve also taught him to place-kick, and Cuff caught on so rapidly to this precise skill he thrice led the league in field goals from placement.

Soar, who later became a major-league baseball umpire, will go down in Giant legend as the player who talked back to Owen when the coach tried to send in some information at a crucial point in a ball game.

"Steve, go away and let us alone," Soar said. "We're awfully busy out here."

One day the Brooklyn club sent a rookie end into the game and "Red" Smith, the assistant coach, sent instructions to Soar: "Use that flanker play. If that kid goes wide with you, rack him up."

The play was called but Soar "racked up" nobody. It

was tried again with no success. When Soar came to the bench, Smith demanded: "What happened to the flanker play?"

"Gosh, 'Red,'" retorted Soar. "It wouldn't work. Every time I went out on a flanker, 'Pug' Manders followed me out. And I couldn't rack up a nice guy like 'Pug'!" When he began rebuilding the Giants with Soar, Cuff,

When he began rebuilding the Giants with Soar, Cuff, and the rest in 1937, Owen promised the fans the championship in three years. It was a bad guess. The Giants won it in two. They went through the 1938 season with an 8–2–1 record and defeated Green Bay in the play-off, 23–17.

The Giants were not in good shape for the title tussle, for Dell Isola was in the hospital and Cuff, Hein, and Lee Shaffer were hurt although able to play. Indeed, Hein recovered a fumble to set up a scoring pass from Danowski to Hap Barnard at end. That, together with a touchdown by Leemans and a field goal by Cuff, gave the Giants a 16–14 edge at the intermission. A third-period field goal by "Tiny" Engebretsen put the Packers ahead by a point, but the Giants surged again with Soar spearheading the attack. Hank finally caught a 23-yard pass from Danowski and dove over the goal line for a touchdown with Clarke Hinkle clinging desperately to one leg.

The Giants retained their divisional crown in 1939 but lost to the Packers in the play-off. A notable victory was achieved at the expense of the Eagles, 13–3, at a time when ten of the Giants were ill of ptomaine. It was a touchdown run by Leemans that turned the ball game, and some sports writers opined the run was made possible by poor tackling on the part of the Philadelphians. To that

charge Bert Bell, their coach, replied: "Talk about bad tackling if you want to. Leemans makes all tacklers look bad. They aren't all poor tacklers in this league, but they all miss him the same way."

The game for which the 1939 Giants will always be remembered, however, was a 9–7 victory over the Redskins. All the Giant points came on field goals, two by Cuff and one by Strong, while the Redskins tallied a touchdown on a 30-yard pass from Frank Filchock to Bob Masterson, who kicked the point.

With forty-five seconds of playing time remaining, Torrance "Bo" Russell, Washington tackle and kicking specialist, stepped back to try a field goal from the 16-yard line. The ball sailed true as it left his foot, and the Redskin linemen, looking up at the crossbar, began to smile in glee. But then the ball veered slightly in its flight, and Referee Bill Halloran spread his arms, the hands palms downward, signaling that the kick had missed.

Actually the ball had passed almost directly above the left upright, thus precipitating one of the most violent arguments in football history. Newspapers ran clips from movies of the play, attempting to prove the kick was good and that Halloran had erred. The furor raged for days, but the official's decision stood, as it always does.

That game, incidentally, further pointed up the greatness of Leemans as a competitor. "Tuffy" had a severe cleat wound in his right leg, and four days before the game doctors expressed some fear he wouldn't even be able to walk for a couple of weeks. Yet when the game began, there was Leemans, not only in the Giants' backfield but in the Redskins', too, harassing them to a frenzy. Although

his leg was swathed in gauze and tape, he intercepted two passes that had been labeled "touchdown."

The year 1940 brought little joy to the Polo Grounds. The Giants had a bad season—so bad that the Brooklyn Dodgers, led by "Ace" Parker, beat them for the first time since 1930 and finished ahead of them in the standings for the first time in history.

Len Eshmont, George Franck, Len Younce, Dom Principe, Marion Pugh, Chet Gladchuck, and Andy Marefos, who was distinguished by his mustache, joined the Giants in 1941 to help them to a divisional title with an 8–3 record. Two of the defeats were administered by Brooklyn, led by Parker, "Pug" Manders, Perry Schwartz, and "Bruiser" Kinard. The score of their second meeting was 21–7 with Manders gaining 90 yards from scrimmage and scoring three touchdowns, one on an intercepted pass.

The Bears, who had lost only one of eleven games, trounced the Giants, 37–9, in the play-off for the championship. In the course of this battle Ben Sohn, a guard, had his shirt ripped from his back. The incident brought Owen charging out with a claim of holding, but he was waved back by the officials. As he reached the bench, Steve muttered: "Maybe I was wrong. I guess the Bears didn't hold Sohn and rip his shirt off after all. It must have been moths."

In an early scrimmage before the start of the 1944 season Lee Shaffer, veteran back who was counted upon to help see the Giants through the wartime manpower shortage, toppled as his knee buckled. He limped toward the side line, a puzzled frown on his face as he called to Charley Porter, the trainer: "Hey, Charley, I've banged up my knee. Feel it. You can hear it click." The knee-

cap was shattered in three places and Shaffer's long career was at an end.

His loss was offset by the return of Cuff, released from military service with a medical discharge. Big Al Blozis, who was to be killed in action, was stationed at nearby Camp Meade and came up week ends to play tackle. Howie Livingston, a scatback, joined up, and Mel Hein returned from a coaching job at Union College to play again and tell the rookies about the time he received a broken nose when a Brooklyn player aimed a punch at Leemans and hit Hein by mistake.

On their way to a sectional championship the Giants were trailing the Redskins, 13–10, with less than ten minutes to go. Cuff had been carrying the ball time and again, and Leemans felt he was too weary to attempt a field goal. "Tuffy" said as much in the huddle.

field goal. "Tuffy" said as much in the huddle.

"Don't be silly," replied the dog-tired Cuff. "You put her down, 'Tuffy,' and I'll kick one."

Cuff was a man of his word. He kicked a perfect 38-yarder to tie the score, and the Giants went on to win.

Another key man in this title drive was old Arnie Herber, salvaged from the Packers, but there was nothing he could do about trimming his former Green Bay teammates in the play-off game.

Steve Filipowicz, former Fordham back, scored his first pro touchdown under extremely unusual circumstances. He was supposed to block the Pitt end on a pass play but forgot the assignment. The Pitt end obligingly slipped and fell flat on his face, thus giving Herber plenty of time to locate a receiver. He spotted the bewildered Filipowicz standing in the end zone, so passed the ball to him for 6 points.

The championship game of 1946 was anticlimactic, the Giants losing to the Bears, 24–14, despite the brilliant play of Filchock, whose nose was broken early in the fray. With that defeat the Giants' fortunes went into reverse and they didn't regain even a threatening position in the race until 1950. Then they upset the champions of the old All America Conference, the mighty Cleveland Browns, twice during the regular season only to lose to them in a third meeting for the divisional championship.

In the first game the Giants struck for a quick 6-point lead and then clung tenaciously to it as Owen's newly devised umbrella defense shackled the Browns,

In the first game the Giants struck for a quick 6-point lead and then clung tenaciously to it as Owen's newly devised umbrella defense shackled the Browns, who never before had been shut out. Later in the season the Giants trailed the Browns, 13–3, at the half and came back with a touchdown to make it 13–10. In the fourth period the Giants worked the ball to the 2-yard line where it was fourth down with goal to go. The setup was perfect for a place kick and a tie score but Owen spurned the tie, shot the works, and scored the touchdown that meant victory.

The Giants might have won the play-off from the Browns, too, but for an off-side penalty that nullified what would have been a touchdown pass from Charley Conerly to Bob McChesney. The Browns won, 8–3, scoring 5 points in the final minute of play.

Eddie Price of Tulane, equally dangerous running from the T- or the A-formation, was the spark plug of these later Giants even as another runner of the same type, Bill Paschal, had been through the middle forties. Price was the league's leading ground gainer in 1951 and 1952, his effectiveness being increased by the passing threat presented by Conerly. But as customary with Owen-



Alphonse "Tuffy" Leemans
Back



Mel Hein Center

HALL OF FAME CANDIDATES FROM THE NEW YORK GIANTS



Steve Owen
Tackle and Coach



Timothy J. Mara Owner



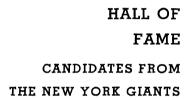
Len Younce Guard



Ray Flaherty End



Ed Danowski Back





Ken Strong



Ward Cuff Back

coached teams, the Giants were primarily defensive wizards, and showing the way was a giant from Washington named Arnie Weinmeister, who had been picked up from the Yankees when the All America went out of business.

Don Stonesifer, Chicago Cardinals' pass-catching end, admitted he got no joy from playing opposite Weinmeister. "It is impossible to block him," Don insisted. "I remember one time when I tried to block him, slid off, and accidentally held his foot with an elbow so that he fell and the play went over him for a good gain. I was feeling quite pleased until Weinmeister picked me up bodily and held me off the ground with my face level with his.

"'I don't like to be held, Don,' he said, his eyes like steel. 'Remember that. No holding. Understand?'

"Yeah, man! I understood!"

THE MAGNIFICENT MARSHALL

20

In 1932 George Preston Marshall got into football and politics. That he preferred the former was to the everlasting betterment of the National Football League and unquestionably a source of great loss to the government. George Marshall would have been a marvelous addition to the Congress, where he could have let his oratory run unfettered and untrammeled, but he cut short a political career for another in which the wind is confined to the bladder of an inflated and animated pigskin.

"I like politics," he admitted shortly after being a member of the rules committee of the 1936 Democratic National Convention, "but I got out because too many people called up to get recommendations for jobs."

Nothing could get George Marshall out of football. It is his life's blood. See him all but burst at the seams with pride when the band strikes up "Hail to the Redskins," and you know that here is a man with one overpowering interest—his football team. He is a man of a million words and as many ideas, a large majority of

them sound. His vocal barrages in behalf of pet notions which he thinks are for the betterment of pro football frequently drive rival club owners slightly daft at league meetings. But all will agree that the sport would not be what it is today were it not for Marshall, his ideas, his enthusiasm, and his zeal.

His first contribution was to standardize the schedule so that each team plays the same number of league games a season. Next he proposed the split of the league into two divisions with the winners meeting for the world's championship. He led the drive for a uniform contract between teams so that all pay-offs are settled on a guarantee to the visitor—at present \$20,000—or a 60–40 split, whichever is larger. It was he who joined with George Halas of the Bears in leading a drive for the rules changes that opened up the game into the offensive circus it is today. It was he who first "dressed up" professional football with elaborate half-time displays and swing bands, and boosted the sale of his product with a carefully planned promotional program.

Showmanship comes naturally to Marshall because he is, at heart, a showman. After getting his schooling at Friends Select School in Washington and Randolph-Macon Academy, he obtained a walk-on part in a Broadway stage production. "I helped carry the star on stage in a sedan chair," he recalls, "but I put too much enthusiasm into the role, and when I bounced the sedan chair, I got bounced, too. But I did draw a pretty good part in New York, and my friends complimented me by calling me a genuine Smithfield ham."

Marshall also played a part with the Morosco Stock Company in Los Angeles and kept his hand in show business by managing theaters in and around Washington and Baltimore. But after a hitch in the Army he found himself in the prosaic role of businessman, his father having died and left him a small wet-wash emporium called the Palace Laundry. Marshall promptly dressed it up to fit its name, and when he sold it in 1945 it had fifty-seven branches in the District of Columbia and environs.

"I immediately began to apply theatrical principles to merchandising," he explains. His motto became "Long Live Linen," the façades of his laundries were done in blue and gold, there were no commercial gimmicks in the windows, which contained only a blue vase with a chrysanthemum. His delivery trucks and their drivers bore the same blue-and-gold decor. He was a thoughtful and considerate employer, and his hired help enjoyed many benefits that were novel at the time. He established medical and dental clinics and group insurance for the employees. He installed cafeterias, shower baths, and lounge rooms in his plants, and a sound system to pipe music to the workers. And if the music usually was at a rapid tempo, it would be because he thought his happy little industrial family could get more work done in less time on this novel "swing" shift.

In 1934 he became publisher of the Washington Times for William Randolph Hearst under a contract in which he promised to engage in no businesses except the laundry, the football team, and publishing. Yet two years later he was active as a director of the million-dollar racing plant on Long Island known as Roosevelt Raceway, then devoted to auto racing but now the home of the harness horse. Marshall's pet promotion there was the Raceway

Club, reserved for notables who paid \$27.50 each to sit in a box seat. Each member wore a little tin lapel button bearing the legend, "Raceway Club." At \$27.50 each Marshall considers the buttons one of his most handsome merchandising efforts.

His number one promotional achievement, however, was in connection with the Pan-American Exposition in Dallas in 1937. There, for a fee of \$100,000, Marshall undertook to spend \$500,000 for a combination sports and theatrical attraction. He organized an international track meet that drew 65,000 people in three nights, an unheard-of turnout for track and field. And at the same time he constructed a pleasure palace and produced for it a show that ranked among the finest in the nation.

At the conclusion of the Dallas exposition Frank Florence, a member of the committee, said he considered the \$100,000 fee to Marshall the best money his group had spent. No wonder George says of the Dallas adventure: "I am prouder of that than anything I ever did."

Brazilians were so impressed by the success of the promotion that they invited Marshall to stage some games in South America the following year. Oswaldo Aranha, the Brazilian ambassador, together with the finance minister, Arthur de Souza Costa, even pledged a sum of \$500,000 to ensure the success of the enterprise. But George spurned the offer.

"I was dazzled," he admits, "but the football bug was too much a part of me. The Redskins had won the world's title that year and that dazzled me even more than the Brazilian offer."

For all that he has "dressed up" the Redskin games with bands and fanfare, Marshall believes that the game

itself is the big thing and that entertainment can never substitute for it.

"Football," he says, "is a game of pageantry. It derives as a spectacle from the gladiator shows of the Romans in the pages of history. It is strictly amphitheater. It needs that atmosphere. Its great success is due to the color surrounding it. Nothing is duller than two teams scrimmaging without music or bands. I would liken football without a band to a musical show without an orchestra. I think the fact that pro football has not gone farther than it has is due to a weakness in the side show."

There is nothing weak about the Marshall side show. It features a 110-piece band, augmented by a dance band perched in a tepee atop the temporary stands along one side line. Both musical units love to give out with the strains of "Hail to the Redskins," written by orchestra leader Barnee Breeskin and Mrs. Marshall, the former Corinne Griffith of the movies whose book, My Life with the Redskins, is an entertaining study of football from the feminine angle.

The Redskin band is one of the great units in football, college or professional. It started in 1937 when a milk company employees' band asked permission to parade and play at home games. The next year the unit was enlarged and the Redskin Marching Band organized. It is composed of volunteers from all walks of lifeprinters, plumbers, students, salesmen, and even musicians. It owns \$25,000 worth of costumes including colorful Indian headdresses. It meets every Tuesday afternoon and has a rehearsal at the Stadium every Thursday night. "We have spirit in that band," Marshall enthuses.

"When you see 110 people stand in ice, snow, or mud at

night for a cup of coffee and a hot dog, as they sometimes do at rehearsal, you have a lot of respect for them. That is the Redskin Band."

The Big Chief of the Redskins makes a genuine production of half-time entertainment, which has included elephants, bears, and monkeys, as well as headline stars of the legitimate theater and occasionally a ballet troupe. When he sets out to do something, he usually succeeds.

There was the time, for instance, when Kate Smith attended a game in Griffith Stadium with her partner, Ted Collins, who then owned the Boston Yanks. Marshall wanted Miss Smith to sing her famous number, "When the Moon Comes Over the Mountain." Collins refused.

"I wanted that song," says Marshall. "So what I did was direct attention to Kate's presence via the P.A. system. Next we switched to the field where we had a stage set with a moon and a mountain. Then we played a recording of her song. The crowd went wild and gave her a tremendous ovation. I believe most of them felt Kate actually had obliged with a song."

These between-halves extravaganzas are part of a deliberate scheme to make a he-man sport interesting to women and children, and to lure new customers who aren't quite sure as yet whether they like football but know well enough when they have had a good time. It's part of Marshall's theory that "if you get women and the kids steamed up over a football game, you have papa hooked."

Through their years of constant striving for the betterment and advancement of professional football, Marshall and Halas have battled side by side. They also have battled head to head on occasion.

THE STORY OF PRO FOOTBALL

During the Redskins-Bears game for the championship in December of 1937 a small free-for-all developed on the field when the Redskins claimed a Bear player had punched Sammy Baugh. Marshall, with a startled shout, "They've hit Baugh," stormed from the stands and onto the field, where he engaged in a violent jawing match with Halas. But let Mrs. Marshall tell the story as she does in her book:

Somehow, they had been pushed over to the Bear bench in front of our box. Halas was saying: "You dirty ———, get up in that box where you belong. It's too bad it ain't a cage. Now laugh that off."

"You shut that — mouth of yours, or I'll punch those — gold teeth right down that red throat!"

One of the Bear players started for him. George seemed to think that a good time to leave. He stomped back to the box, snorted as he sat down and, of course, took it out on me.

"What's the matter with you? You look white as a sheet!"

"Oh, that was awful!"
"What was awful?"

"That horrible language. We heard every word."

"Well, you shouldn't listen."

"Oh, you. And right in front of ladies." George started to protest. "It was so humiliating," I continued, "I never want to see a pro game again as long as I live." George began to wilt. "And I am sure none of these ladies will ever come again." George's raccoon coat began to wilt. "—or allow their children to." Silence. "And as for that man Halas!" Every hair of George's raccoon coat bristled. "He's positively revolt—"

"Don't you dare say anything against Halas," George was actually shaking his finger under my nose. "He's my best friend!"

Six years later Marshall and his raccoon coat made another appearance on Wrigley Field during a championship game between the Redskins and Bears. This one cost him \$500, and a similar fine was plastered against Ralph Brizzolara, diminutive Chicago steel executive who was then running the Bears while Halas served in the Navy.

Marshall, it seems, had wandered down onto the field shortly before the end of the first half. As George himself put it, he wanted to pay a friendly visit to the Bear coaches at half time, but miscalculated the time and found himself at the Bear bench before the half ended. The Bears found him there, too, and demanded his ejection. Brizzolara and Jack Goldie, the equipment manager, obliged, escorting him forcibly back to the stands. Marshall's march didn't end there, either, for a diligent usher kept him moving because he couldn't produce a box-seat ticket stub.

Marshall's troubles with the Bears and Halas reached a peak midway of the 1951 season. Herman Ball had been bounced as the Washington head coach, and Marshall wanted Heartley "Hunk" Anderson to replace him. Anderson, although he had quit coaching to enter business, was still property of the Bears, for whom he had toiled for many years. Halas refused to release Anderson unless Marshall would agree to give him a tackle in exchange, and the man he wanted was Paul Lipscomb, one of the best in the league. Marshall screamed that the trading of a player for a coach was unheard of, he stormed that Halas had no right standing in the way of Anderson's advancement. Halas finally closed the issue by paying "Hunk" a huge salary to return to the Bears as a part-time assistant coach, but the breach between Halas and Marshall and Halas and Anderson created by this episode has never healed.

THE STORY OF PRO FOOTBALL

That was but one of Marshall's troubles with coaches. He has been plagued with them ever since he was bitten by the football bug. He has seen coaches come and coaches go in an almost unending stream, and there are those who insist that Marshall himself is the only real coach the Redskins ever have had. Back in 1945 when Dud De Groot was the head coach, another National League coach commented on the Washington situation in this way:

"Clark Shaughnessy, the Pitt coach, gives De Groot the plays to use. 'Turk' Edwards runs the line and signs the men he wants. De Groot gets his own backs and runs Shaughnessy's formations. Mrs. Marshall stages the between-halves ceremonies, and if she doesn't have enough time, Marshall gets the devil. And Marshall? He got on the phone during the Redskins-Rams game and ordered De Groot to 'get that lousy end out a there' although Dud didn't have any better replacement. De Groot won't stay long even if he has a contract."

He didn't. Neither have his successors, for in the nine years following Ray Flaherty's entrance into service in 1943 the Redskins have had no less than seven head coaches. They may even have more in the near future, too, unless the Redskins go on the warpath with a vengeance, for Marshall is a man with vision, and the vision is another championship for Washington.

REDSKINS ON THE WARPATH

21

GEORGE MARSHALL once said that the best of the many coaches he has hired was "Lone Star" Dietz, and it was a typically Marshall touch that he should select an Indian to coach his Boston club the very year that "Redskins" was adopted as its name. Dietz was, says George, "a genius an inventive, brilliant strategist."

Certainly no Indian ever infiltrated enemy lines with greater success than Dietz did one day during his first season. The Bears were in Boston, quartered at the Brunswick Hotel, and on the Saturday preceding the game Halas called his players together for one of his coaching innovations. Movies had been taken of the preceding week's game, and the Bears were about to study them to learn of their individual mistakes. The meeting was classified top secret, and there was much "shushing" and many furtive glances as the players assembled in a ballroom which had been reserved for the historic occasion. Frank Halas, the club secretary, was stationed as a guard at one door. Andy Lotshaw, the trainer, stood at the other.

The film was run and re-run as flaws in the Bears' offense were detected and corrected. The screen told clearly why this play worked, why that one didn't. When the lights finally were turned on there came a burst of applause from the front row of seats. There sat "Lone Star" Dietz!

"Wonderful! Wonderful!" he beamed. "Thank you. A great idea, George. I learned a lot."

And so he did. That evening he revised his defenses. Next afternoon the Redskins held the favored Bears to a 7-0 score!

One of the Redskin heroes of that day, and for many others in years to come, was Cliff Battles, a shifty runner out of West Virginia Wesleyan whose ball-carrying exploits in the National Football League have seldom been equaled. He was a Marshall discovery.

"I had followed West Virginia teams since my boy-hood," Marshall says, "and was always partial to them. Even when I saw Wesleyan and Battles take shellackings from Navy, Georgetown, and other teams I still felt Battles was the hottest thing in college football. So after the season I sent out the business manager to Wesleyan.

"'Sign Battles,' I told him, 'or just keep going south!'"

Marshall had found his way into professional football through his laundry business, little dreaming he would clean up in both. Back in 1926 he organized a basketball team to obtain publicity for the laundry and entered it in the old National Basketball League where he came into contact with Halas and Joe Carr. Naturally, some of their enthusiasm for football began to rub off on Marshall, who never missed a big fight, a Kentucky Derby, or any other major sports event. Jimmy Walker, the late mayor of

New York City, who could run a dead heat with Marshall in the matter of sartorial splendor, contributed his bit by trying to influence his old friend George to purchase the Brooklyn grid franchise. He failed, but only because the price was too high.

By 1931 the constant importunings of Halas and Carr had Marshall really interested. That fall he attended a game between the Bears and Giants in New York, along with Vincent Bendix, Jay O'Brien, and M. Dorland Doyle. They liked what they saw and that evening, during the course of a party at the apartment of Jack Hearst, they decided to put up \$7,500 each and get into the football business, with the proviso that Marshall operate the team. They selected Boston largely because of O'Brien's friendship with Judge Emil Fuchs, who owned the Boston Braves baseball team. The 1932 team was called the Braves inasmuch as it used Braves' Field as its home grounds. Lud Wray was hired as coach.

The venture was doomed to failure almost from the start. Boston was vitally interested in Harvard football, and it supported Boston College, Boston University, and nearby Holy Cross. With a few exceptions like Bill Cunningham, the press was cold toward the pro game and so were the fans—almost as cold as the New England weather. The combination of these frigid factors meant a loss of \$46,000 in the very first year, whereupon the other partners withdrew, leaving Marshall to carry on a lone fight. His first reorganizational steps were to move to Fenway Park, change the team's name, and hire Dietz.

Dietz's teams of '33 and '34 maintained an exact .500 rating, winning eleven, losing eleven, and tying two games. The next year under Eddie Casey the 'Skins were

properly skinned, winning two, losing seven, and tying one. Then Ray Flaherty moved in for the first of seven successful years as coach and the team began to move. Flaherty was a red-headed end from Gonzaga and a veteran of nine years in the pro ranks, seven of them with the New York Giants. He knew football, he could handle his players, and he was temperamentally so well adjusted he could work harmoniously with the mercurial Marshall. They made a winning combination. And it didn't take them long to make a winning team.

They did it, in fact, in their very first year together, but although the improved Redskins won the Eastern division championship with a 7-5 record, Boston remained unimpressed. It had too many other sports interests.

"When Princeton and Harvard drew 20,000 at Cambridge the same day 40,000 watched the horses run at Narragansett, I knew it marked the end of football in Boston," Marshall recalls. "I decided to move the team to a more conservative town."

Before he could get around to that, however, there remained the championship play-off game with the Western champions, the Green Bay Packers. Marshall was so mad at Boston and Bostonians by this time that he switched the "big" game to the Polo Grounds in New York, the first time in history the title had been decided on a neutral field. The Redskins never returned to Boston except to pack up their belongings.

The team that Flaherty assembled that year had an explosive backfield that included Battles, Riley Smith, Ernie Pinckert, "Pug" Rentner, and Don Irwin. Wayne Millner and Charley Malone were at ends, "Turk" Ed-

wards and Jim Barber at tackles, Les Olsson and Jim Karcher at guards, and Frank "Pete" Bausch at center. Most of them were to remain in the championship class for years, but in 1936 they were just beginning to jell as a unit and they lacked a forward passer. Nevertheless, they won the division crown by beating the Giants in the mud and rain at New York in the final game. The score was 14–0 with the elusive Battles sloshing 80 yards for the cushion touchdown.

The championship game attracted 29,545 New Yorkers despite the fact the fans had no immediate rooting interest in either the Redskins or the Packers; but the Redskins' hopes were dashed in the first minutes of play. Before the game had progressed three minutes, Green Bay led on a long pass and, immediately after the subsequent kickoff, Battles was carried off the field with a badly injured leg. Shorn of their top offensive threat, the 'Skins went down to a 21–6 defeat.

Marshall now had a fine ball club but no place for it to play. However, the promotional bee was buzzing again in his noggin, and it had advised him to invite a few people to attend the championship game. The guest list included Clark Griffith, owner of the Washington Senators baseball team, and Washington's leading sports writers and columnists. They enjoyed the game, and when George asked them that evening whether they'd support pro football if he brought the Redskins to the capital, they agreed to do their part as long as Marshall and the Redskins did theirs.

That was all the assurance Marshall needed and with Woolworth Donohue, Doyle, and Eddie Reeves as partners, he effected the switch of the franchise to Washington

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with Griffith Stadium as his home grounds. The move was accomplished at the very time he was setting Texas in an uproar with his lavish productions at the Dallas exposition, so perhaps it should not be surprising that only 916 season tickets were sold in advance. It wasn't long afterward that all choice Redskins seats were gobbled up in the advance sale of season books, and a complete sellout by midweek preceding a game was commonplace.

Marshall alone, for all his promotional genius, couldn't have wrought this miracle. Neither could the Redskins. It was accomplished by a tall, spare, almost skinny young man from Texas. His name was Samuel Adrian Baugh.

SLINGIN' SAM 22

In the Clubhouse after the Redskins' play-off defeat at the hands of Green Bay, Coach Flaherty consoled his players with the statement they needed only a great forward passer to win the world's championship in a romp. Consequently, his job was to find one immediately. There were a number of good passers among the graduating collegians, and of these the most sensational in point of performance was Baugh, who had been so devastating with his pitching for Texas Christian that he had been nicknamed "Slingin' Sam." Most pro clubs were shying away from Baugh despite his record. Sammy was so tall and spare, he wasn't considered rugged enough for the big league.

"Take my advice," Grantland Rice, dean of America's sports writers, told Marshall, "if you sign him, insure his right arm for a million dollars. Those big pros will tear it off."

Poor feeble Sammy Baugh, it turned out, was so fragile that he lasted only sixteen years in pro footballa record that only the indestructible Johnny Blood ever approached and which undoubtedly will stand for all time.

It took no small amount of oratory for Marshall to persuade Baugh to come to Washington that summer of 1937 to talk contract. Sammy had his eye set on a career in professional baseball; but at length he agreed to give pro football a whirl and wait until the next spring to consider baseball. These preliminary conversations took place over the long distance telephone and, before hanging up the receiver, Marshall asked Sammy to purchase some Texas boots and a ten-gallon hat.

"What size?" Baugh inquired.

"Don't you know your own sizes?" Marshall asked.
"Sure," admitted Baugh, "but I thought they were for you. Besides, I've never worn cowboy boots and a big hat."

"Get them," ordered Marshall. "I want you to be wearing them when you step off the plane here in Washington. I'll pay you for them when you get here."

On June 1, 1937, Baugh stepped off the plane looking

every inch the traditional Texan of western storybooks every inch the traditional Texan of western storybooks—and there are six feet, two inches of him. The reporters, photographers, and newsreel men who recorded his arrival were delighted. Later Sammy learned to walk in those spike-heeled boots as though he had been born in them, but as soon as he had reached the privacy of Marshall's office this day, he yanked them off with the comment: "My feet are killing me."

The exact figures of the contract Baugh signed that day have never been revealed, but it was announced that the pact called for the highest salary ever paid a pre-

the pact called for the highest salary ever paid a pro

player up to that time. Guesses ranged from \$10,000 to \$25,000. Whatever the sum, Marshall got a bargain.

There's a story that went the rounds after Baugh's first workout with the Redskins. It's one that has been told of others as well, but it fits the Baugh pattern to a T—even as he eventually turned to the T-formation after setting passing records as a tailback.

"You," Coach Flaherty instructed Wayne Millner, "go downfield and buttonhook behind the middle linebacker. And you, Sammy, hit him in the eye with the football. Right in the eye, understand?"

"Sure, coach," Sammy agreed, "but just one question." "Yes?"

"Which eye?"

Whether that incident actually transpired is immaterial. The fact remains that when practice was over, Flaherty ran headlong to Marshall, waving his arms in exultation.

"Boss," he cried, "you've done it. You've come up with the greatest passer in the world."

Sammy Baugh hadn't come by his unique skill accidentally. It was acquired through hard work and arduous hours of practice. As a high-school athlete, during summer vacation, Baugh removed the seat from a swing that hung from a bough of a big tree in his back yard. He replaced the seat with an old automobile tire and then used it as a target for his practice passes. His aim, in due time, became so accurate he could swing the tire in a wide arc and while on the run pass the football squarely through the hoop.

When Baugh and the Redskins made their debut in Washington in September, they did so before the biggest football crowd in the capital's history to that moment. The 19,941 new fans saw Baugh play the full sixty minutes and saw the Redskins win, 13–3, but Sammy wasn't the bright star. That distinction went jointly to Riley Smith and Battles. It wasn't till well along toward midseason that Sammy really began to click. By that time his teammates had become accustomed to handling his bullet throws, and the offense had been readjusted to take full advantage of both Baugh's passing and Battles' running.

Football fever really reached epidemic proportions in Washington in late Nevember 1027 release 24 702.

Football fever really reached epidemic proportions in Washington in late November, 1937, when 24,702 wild-eyed converts to the pro game cheered as a pass from Baugh to Malone helped the Redskins to victory over the champion Packers.

The next Sunday the 'Skins went to New York to meet the Giants for the divisional championship, and some 10,000 Washingtonians went along with them. They descended on Broadway in the morning and paraded noisily behind a brass band, shouting and brandishing Indian headdresses.

In his dressing-room talk before the game, Flaherty told his boys how they could have won the previous year if they had had a passer. "You've got one now," he said, "the best in the world.

"I don't know whether the Giants are out to get Baugh or not," he went on. "All I know is that I'm holding ten other guys on this team responsible for Sammy's safety. If anything happens to him, you'll hear from me!"

Nothing happened to Baugh. But plenty happened to the Giants. Sammy threw fifteen passes and completed eleven, and when the Giants deployed to stop his throwing, Battles ran through the disorganized defense on

touchdown gallops of 75 and 76 yards. On each run Baugh threw a key block to remove a tackler from Cliff's path. When the two had completed their depredations, the final score was Redskins, 49—Giants, 14. The Redskin players maintained that "Turk" Edwards was terrific that day—if he didn't knock down at least three men on a play, he'd want to run it over again.

"The best part of it," says Marshall, glowing with the memory, "was our homecoming to Washington that night. About 10,000 fans were on hand at the station although it was midnight and raining."

Thus the Redskins found themselves in another championship play-off, this time against the mighty Bears. They arrived in Chicago on the heels of a blizzard and in the midst of a sub-zero wave. Chicago fans, who had seen Baugh lead the College All Stars to victory over the Packers before the start of the season, were eager to see him again, but they wondered what the weather would do to his aim. They discovered to their sorrow it hampered him very little.

The weather had moderated by kick-off time, but the field, although it had been protected by tarpaulins and straw and attempts had been made to thaw the surface with asphalt burners, was frozen and slippery. The game, however, was hot enough right from the start.

On his first play from scrimmage, with the ball in play on the Washington 9-yard line, Baugh dropped back as though to punt but double-crossed the Bears with a short pass to Battles, who caught the ball in the flat and raced 42 yards. A few plays later he went 7 yards on a reverse to a touchdown. The Bears tied it in just four plays and scored again on a pass to lead 14–7 at the half.

Then Baugh took charge. First he passed 55 yards to Millner for a score and, after the Bears had scored again, passed to Millner once more for 78 yards and a touchdown. Then, with the title in the balance he passed 35 yards to Ed Justice for the points that made the final score Washington, 28—Bears, 21. For the day his record was 34 passes attempted, 17 completed for 347 yards.

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With the world's championship as a reward for his first season in pay-for-play football, Baugh turned to baseball as he had planned, reporting to the camp of the St. Louis Cardinals as an infielder. Just how good he was can best be told in the words of Eddie Dyer, who saw him in training camp and later managed the Cards.

"When he was working out around third base, we had another rookie at shortstop," Dyer recalls. "You could hardly tell 'em apart. They looked like twins in appearance and action. The shortstop was Marty Marion, and any time anybody looks anything like Marion he must have a lot of ability."

Sammy remained in baseball most of the season, playing with Columbus and Rochester, but one day when the Rochester club was in Baltimore he visited Washington and signed a three-year contract with the Redskins. Then he went back to Baltimore and quit baseball for good.

For most of the next fall it seemed he had made a

For most of the next fall it seemed he had made a poor decision in his choice of careers. He was harassed by one injury after another, and at one time he was hurt so badly, it was believed he never would play football again. That was when, in a game against the Eagles, he was carried off the field with a severely damaged left shoulder. One of the nation's top surgeons said after examining him in the dressing room: "That boy is through.

He'll never play again. He may never be able to use the arm again." He did, though, long before the season was over, only to be hurt again. It was no wonder, therefore, that the 'Skins did not retain their title.

They came startlingly close to another championship in 1939, however, through a couple of fortunate circumstances. For one thing, Riley Smith retired and Baugh was assigned the signal-calling job, a task at which he proved as adept as he was at throwing a football through the eye of a needle. For another, the Redskins experienced one of the most fortunate draft selections imaginable, coming up with the nucleus of what was to be a succession of great teams—halfbacks Dick Todd and Wilbur Moore and linemen Dick Farman, Steve Slivinski, and Clyde Shugart.

Todd, a smallish fellow for the rugged pro game, was as elusive as a wraith. He was also Baugh's best friend. Indeed, they were so inseparable that Dick McCann, then a Washington newspaperman but now general manager of the Redskins, once said that the Redskin publicity department, in answering requests for Baugh's personal appearances, used to say somewhat irreverently: "Baugh will be there—Todd willing."

Despite an injury that side-lined Baugh through a couple of games, the Redskins went into the final game of the regular schedule in a deadlock with the Giants. Each had a record of eight victories, one defeat, and a tie—the latter a scoreless affair in which the old rivals battled each other to no avail. The Giants won the second and decisive meeting when "Bo" Russell's disputed kick went astray as recounted elsewhere under the Giants' record of achievements.

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The following year the Redskins won the Eastern title with a 9–2 record only to have the season crumble in ashes as the Bears rolled up that never-to-be-forgotten 73–0 score. Oddly, that horrible shellacking didn't discourage either the Redskins or the fans, the advance sale for the 1941 campaign reaching an all-time high. It wasn't until '42, however, that the 'Skins were to achieve another championship.

They opened that season with a 28–14 victory over the Steelers, which was unique for only one reason—that Sammy Baugh, the old pass-master, was on the receiving end of one for the first and only time. It was a trick play concocted by Baugh and Todd. The latter took the ball on what appeared to be a routine swing wide around end, but before he was to cut downfield, he stopped and threw a pass across the field at a sharp angle to Baugh. Sammy caught it and scampered gleefully for 39 yards and a touchdown. Or so he thought. But a whistle had blown and the Redskins were penalized 15 yards for committing some unnecessary bit of violence against the person of one of the Pittsburghers.

The year was unique in another way, too, for the Redskins lost their only decision of the season to a team that didn't so much as make a first down against them! The team was the old Washington nemesis, the Giants, and the game was played in a heavy rain at Griffith Stadium. So sturdy was the Redskin defense that the New Yorkers made only *one* yard by rushing, yet so unusual were the day's developments that the Giants won the ball game, 14–7.

The Giants scored in the early moments on the only pass they completed all afternoon. It was a 30-yard toss from "Tuffy" Leemans to Will Walls, who ran another 20 yards to the goal line. The Redskins battled back to tie the score, but in the third period O'Neal Adams intercepted a pass by Dick Poillon and ran 66 yards to a touchdown.

"One yard!" Marshall stormed as he surveyed the situation. "Gadzooks, I could make more yardage than that just by falling down!"

The Redskins completed the schedule with a record of ten victories and that one defeat, and then prepared to play host to the Bears, who had stormed unbeaten through eleven games and were being hailed as supermen. They might have gone into the record books as such but for a simple trick of psychology employed by Flaherty. The Washington coach simply chalked in large white figures on a blackboard in the Redskins' dressing room this brief but impressive message: "73–0." That was all the incentive needed to inspire such survivors of the 1940 massacre as Farman, "Ki" Aldrich, Clem Stralka, Baugh, and others. They came onto the field demanding revenge—and they got it.

The Bears scored first when Lee Artoe, a big tackle, pounced on a fumble and lumbered to a touchdown, after which the try for point went wide. The Redskins brought the next kickoff back only to their 12-yard line, and the spectators began to wonder if another slaughter was in the making and if history was about to repeat itself. But Baugh, on the first play, caught the Bears flat-footed with a tremendous quick-kick (his specialty) that rolled dead on the Bears' 5-yard line.

With that kick Baugh had said in effect: "Here's the ball. Let's see what you can do with it. We can score later on." And score the Redskins did, first on a pass from Baugh to Moore and later on a plunge by Andy Farkas. Bob Masterson converted after each and the 'Skins were home free, 14–6. They had exacted their full measure of vengeance.

They rubbed salt into the Bears' wounds again early in 1943. By this time Flaherty was in the Navy and "Dutch" Bergman was serving as head coach. Many of the great old Redskins were at war, too, but others still remained, chief among them the amazing Baugh. Sammy was hurt before the Bear game, however, and George Cafego started in his place, directing the team on a drive that carried to within 18 yards of the Chicago goal line. Then Baugh and Moore trotted in as substitutes. Obviously the stage was set for this passing combination to perform its specialty. That is what the fans thought. And the Bears, too. Instead, as Baugh faked the expected pass, Moore, who had made a false start downfield, swung around behind Baugh, took the ball on the ancient Statue of Liberty play, and raced to a touchdown. The Bears never recovered from that shock and lost, 21-7.

The Redskins continued their rampage until their record read six victories and one tie. They had played seventeen games without a defeat in two seasons. Then inexplicably they slid into a slump and lost three in a row, two to the Giants. What had seemed to be a cakewalk to a championship now became a battle royal in the form of a play-off game with the Giants, the third meeting between the teams in as many weeks. Here again psychology was to play a major role as Bergman assayed a daring gamble.

In the clubhouse as the players prepared to take the

field, the coach stepped up to Baugh and roared: "I know you already have bought your ticket for home. You don't think we can win. You don't think we can win this one and go on to the championship play-off. Well, you're yellow! Yes, yellow!"

That did it. The Redskins were mad. Baugh was mad. And all played their heads off to achieve a 28–0 victory.

Bergman afterward admitted he never once questioned Baugh's courage. He called him a truly great competitor. "But," he chuckled, "I did believe our boys were down in the dumps, and I thought that was the best way I could fire 'em up."

The Redskins didn't stay in a fired-up mood for the play-off game against the Bears. Baugh was knocked cold early in the game and sat out most of the action as the Chicagoans raced to a 41–21 decision.

Bergman quit after this season, and the job was offered to "Turk" Edwards, who declined. It was then that Marshall brought in De Groot and hired Shaughnessy as an advisory coach. Their arrival, of course, meant the installation of the T-formation. All this was new to Baugh. He not only had to master the intricacies of ball-handling and a new system of signal-calling, but he had to change his passing style. He had been accustomed to taking a direct snap from center and backing up, facing the opposition at all times as he surveyed the field for his receivers. Now, under the T, he had to fake his handoffs, then step back and take a quick look for his receivers.

During one early game he told the ends, in the huddle, to go deep and crisscross. He told the halfbacks to fan out and then buttonhook. The fullback looked puzzled. "What do I do?" he asked.

"I don't know," said Sammy, "just don't get in my way when I go back to pass."

Baugh didn't like the T-formation and he didn't like the idea of having to learn it, but it was a job and he tackled it as he did any other one. By 1945 he had it licked. And he had licked enough opponents to place the Redskins in another championship play-off, this time against Cleveland. Along the way to the title fray he had enjoyed a sensational afternoon against the Giants, passing for two touchdowns, running 71 yards with an intercepted pass, batting down two New York passes in the end zone, and, as safety man, making no less than seven tackles.

It was unfortunate that Sammy should be the goat of a 15–14 Redskin defeat in that ice-coated title game in Cleveland against the Rams, told in detail earlier. He attempted a daring pass from behind his goal line and the ball hit the goal post and rebounded into the end zone for an automatic safety—the two points that decided the ball game.

With that freak happening luck seemed to turn its back on the Redskins. Never since have they won a championship, or even been a serious contender. They've tried numerous coaches—Edwards, John E. Whelchel, Herman Ball, Dick Todd, and "Curly" Lambeau—but somewhere the winning formula has been misplaced.

Through the dark days, however, Baugh remained a

Through the dark days, however, Baugh remained a shining light. The years rested lightly on his shoulders as he continued to add new achievements to what was already an unparalleled passing record. Strangely, he enjoyed particular success against the Chicago Cardinals, even when the Big Red was riding high on the champion-ship road in 1947.



Ernie Pinckert
Back



Wayne Millner End

HALL OF
FAME
CANDIDATES FROM
THE WASHINGTON
REDSKINS





Sammy Baugh
Back





George Preston Marshall
Owner



A. G. "Turk" Edwards

Tackle and Coach

HALL OF
FAME
CANDIDATES FROM
THE WASHINGTON
REDSKINS



Dick Todd





Before the game with the Cardinals that year, Baugh was presented with an automobile. After the ceremony Joe Tereshinski, Redskin end, said: "There's the greatest football player who ever lived. We ought to show him what we think of him. Let's see that he doesn't get any dirt on his pants today!"

The field was muddy, but the Redskins did just what Tereshinski had suggested. Not a Cardinal laid a hand on Sammy as he threw 33 passes and completed 25 for 355 yards and 6 touchdowns. The Redskins won, 45–21, in one of the major upsets of the year.

Five seasons later, as a highlight of his final campaign, Baugh drove the Cardinals daffy once more as he completed eleven passes in succession for two touchdowns that assured the Redskins a 23–7 upset triumph before Sammy was ejected from the game for taking a punch at Don Joyce, huge Chicago lineman.

That was perhaps the only time Sammy Baugh ever resorted to fist-slinging. He did damage enough merely by throwing the football. Once a rookie end with the Giants fetched Baugh a vicious punch to the nose after he had thrown a pass. Sammy remonstrated, advising the lad to play football and forget the rough stuff. Shortly afterward, again after the pass had been thrown, the rookie sent a fist into Baugh's face.

Sammy called the signal for another pass and cautioned his fullback not to attempt to block the overly enthusiastic rookie. Sam waited until the roughhousing lad was almost upon him, then let fly with the football squarely into his face!

There was no more rough stuff. Unfortunately, there are no more Sammy Baughs, either.

BELL, BILL, AND O'BRIEN 23

BERT BELL's first contact with professional football came one day in the early twenties when, strolling down Broad Street in Philadelphia, he chanced to meet Lou Little, Heinie Miller, and Lud Wray, all former teammates at Pennsylvania. The three were promoting a game against the Canton Bulldogs in Baker Bowl but were running short of ready cash. Their immediate problem was how and where to feed and house the athletes. "Well," said Bell, "what am I in the hotel business for if I can't help out some old pals? Bring them over to my hotel, as guests."

That was the first time Bert Bell lost money in pro football. It wasn't the last. The game kept dealing him one swift kick after another in the wallet, almost to the very day he was named commissioner of the sport in 1946. But Bert, who was quite a back in his days at Penn, knew how to fall and bounce up unhurt. And it is an odd twist of fate that the sport which kicked Bell around so unmercifully should enjoy its greatest era of prosperity under his leadership!

Lou Little still rates Bell the most popular captain he has known in football. Bell led one of Penn's finest teams, and it was his play against Bucknell that led Cardinal Mercier, witnessing his first football game, to call it "très joli." Football to Bell was, and is, fun. Once, on the way to a game against Michigan, the Penn squad was tense to the point of jitters. Dr. Frank B. Hancock, the team physician, opened a huge black bag fairly bulging with pills, medicines, and instruments. Bert examined the contents, then asked loudly: "What's Michigan going to do, Doc, use blackjacks on us?"

Penn relaxed. It also won the game, 10-7.

Had not he loved football more, Bell might have been in the social register or perhaps a leading politician. His father was attorney general of Pennsylvania. A brother was the state's lieutenant governor and served a twenty-day term as governor when the incumbent vacated to take a seat in the United States Senate. A brother was a justice of the state supreme court. Bert once was asked to run for mayor of Philadelphia but declined, with the comment: "Sorry, but I can't kiss babies."

His contact with pro football was renewed in 1932 when his friend George Marshall called him on the telephone. Marshall confided he was eager to purchase a pro franchise and wanted a recommendation for the job of head coach. Bell without hesitation named his pal, Lud Wray. So Wray went to Boston with Marshall, but not for long. The two just didn't hit it off. The big break came when Marshall suggested Wray send in a certain play.

The coach bridled. "If you want to run the club," he stormed, "I'll go sit in the stands."

"Go ahead," replied Marshall.

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Less than a year later, Wray and Marshall combined to lead Bell into the game.

"You'll like the pro game," Wray told him. And not long thereafter Marshall suggested he buy the franchise of the old Frankford Yellowjackets. On July 9, 1933, the Frankford franchise was declared forfeited and awarded to Bell and Wray, who paid \$2,800 for it.

Sixteen years later a group of citizens was to pay \$300,000 for the club, but there was little indication of such a boom in value during the Bell regime. In three years the Eagles, as the team had been named, lost \$80,-000. Only Bell remained of those who had invested heavily in the team, and Wray still hung on as head coach, but in 1938 Bell took over the coaching reins as well. Indeed, he was football's closest approach to the storied one-man-band. He was owner, coach, general manager, business manager, ticket manager, auditor. He did almost everything but sweep out the offices and tape the players before the Sunday games.

The low point of his career came in 1939 when the Eagles were scheduled to meet Brooklyn in Municipal Stadium in Philadelphia, a vast acreage that seats more than 100,000 people. Rain fell in torrents on Saturday and continued through Sunday. Bell logically wanted to call off the game, or at least arrange a postponement until such time as the floods receded and the gridiron reappeared from beneath the water. However, Dan Topping, owner of the Brooklyn club, had promised to take a friend to the game and was determined the friend should not be disappointed. And so the game went on.

Topping and his friend sat warm and comfortable in

an enclosed automobile parked along the side line. There

were perhaps fifty other people in the stands and they all converged upon the press box for shelter. There they, like the gentlemen of the press, ate red hots and drank hot coffee—on Bert Bell!

During the eight years he owned the Eagles the club never won more than five games in a single season, and in 1939–40 it won only two of twenty-two, yet the Eagles were always colorful and interesting and boasted many of football's most picturesque figures. Bell kept going through shrewd trading of "names" for "horses," schedule concessions, and, when all else failed, a stubborn refusal to concede defeat.

What lured Bell into pro football in the first place, besides his inherent devotion to the game, was the impending repeal of the Pennsylvania blue laws that prohibited Sunday sports events. Bell's Eagles had the number one license to engage in professional sport on Sunday in Philadelphia, and battled the Bears to a 3–3 tie on November 10, 1933, even before the governor had signed the bill making Sunday pastiming legal.

There were no plush traveling accommodations for those early Eagles. They didn't fly high. They went by bus. In 1934, for instance, they made a road trip to Green Bay, Cincinnati, and Pittsburgh by bus. They'd drive along until they saw a likely-looking, level field, where they'd pause for practice. They'd stop in small-town hotels or high schools to bathe. The bus driver doubled as equipment manager. Still, the team managed to win four and lose seven for the season.

Chuck Hajek, former Northwestern center, had the unique distinction that season of being the first and probably the only seventy-five-minute player in history.

"We were playing an exhibition game in Reading," Hajek recalls, "and the field was frozen solid. Part of it extended over the skinned portion of the baseball diamond and the footing was impossible. I was the only center on the squad of twenty-one men, so I was reconciled to sixty minutes of play. The second team played the entire first half, with me at center, but the weather was so cold Bell decided it would be wise for the first team to warm up during the intermission. So I ran signals with the 'varsity' for fifteen minutes, then played the entire second half."

In 1935 the Eagles were joined briefly by one of the most unusual figures ever to soar like a skyrocket into the sports limelight—and drop as quickly. He was Edwin "Alabama" Pitts, a husky lad whose athletic prowess first came to public attention while he was serving a term in Sing Sing prison.

Following his pardon, the 185-pounder played the last two months of the baseball season with Albany, then turned his attention to football. He joined the Eagles as a halfback, and the day he reported to the training base at Chestnut Hills Academy, some 10,000 fans were on hand to see him, so great had been his ballyhoo.

His first real test came in an exhibition game in old Baker Bowl. The Eagles looked terrible in the first half. They trailed 0–7 at the quarter and 0–13 at half time. Coach Wray was in a fury as he harangued his players during the intermission. He paid off two players and ordered them out of uniform. He upbraided the rest as a useless lot of "dog meat." When the second half began he took only eleven men onto the field, leaving the rest in the clubhouse, but not long afterward Jim Leonard,

former Notre Dame halfback, was injured and a rush call was put in for Pitts.

Only there was no Pitts available. "Alabama" was in street clothes and departing from the clubhouse in a rage. Bell asked why.

"Well," said Pitts, "I've been around a lot and in some pretty rough places. I've been called a lot of bad names. But, by golly, nobody is going to call me 'dog meat!"

Bell talked the irate Pitts into simmering down and getting back into uniform. When he finally got into the game, he caught the first pass thrown to him for a substantial gain. Unfortunately, however, his talents weren't of National League caliber and after two games he was released, to lapse once more into obscurity.

The next season Bell engineered one of his best deals, getting Bill Hewitt, the Bears' great end, for Sam Francis, Nebraska backfield star. Hewitt had been around the pro wars for a time, but he was far from through; and his aggressive leadership made the Eagles a team to be reckoned with even if they didn't win often.

In one of his first games against his old teammates, the Bears attempted to discourage Hewitt as quickly as possible. They sent three blockers against him on the first play. Hewitt went down, but bounced back up, then turned to the three Bears.

"That's a silly play," he laughed. "Three men on one end! What's the matter with you guys? Haven't you any confidence in yourselves?"

Once in 1938 the Detroit management made a serious tactical blunder. In the official game program Hewitt was referred to as "double ugly." Hewitt was infuriated and

all but ripped the Lions apart as the Eagles scored a 21-7 upset to knock Detroit out of a chance to tie for the Western division championship.

Hewitt caught one pass from Dave Smukler and tossed a lateral to Joe Carter, the other end, for a touchdown. He snared another pass from Smukler for a score and disrupted the Lion offense with his headlong charges and vicious tackling. A Detroit newspaper account of the game said: "Hewitt was never better as he carried the Eagles along on his play and sophomoric enthusiasm."

Hewitt was irrepressible even in his later years. Once Stan Baumgartner, Philadelphia sports writer and former major-league pitcher, was officiating an Eagle game and slapped a 15-yard penalty against Hewitt.

"What was I doing?" Bill demanded.

"You know darn well what you were doing," said Baumgartner.

"Hah!" chortled Hewitt. "Just as lousy an official as you are a writer!"

In addition to Jim McMurdo at tackle, one of Hewitt's ablest helpers in sparking the downtrodden Eagles was Dave Smukler, burly fullback from Temple. Smukler had a mind of his own and wasn't one to be tied down by club rules, with the result that Bell frequently found it necessary to assess fines against him. Bert finally sold him to Detroit for \$5,000 and tackle Ray George and end Joe Wendlick. But Smukler never played for the Lions. Instead, he enlisted.

Bell, who was by then part owner of the Steelers, heard in 1944 that Smukler was about to be released from service, so repurchased his contract from the Lions for \$100. Bert then reached Smukler by phone in Los Angeles,

and the veteran fullback agreed to play again provided Bell would furnish railroad fare and a Pullman compartment to the training camp at Hershey, Pennsylvania. Bell complied with the request. A week later the players assembled, but Smukler was still missing. Finally a letter arrived.

"I wish I still had it," Bell chuckles, "but its theme was roughly this—'... all these ridiculous fines... the Army taught me one thing... hurray for old "Smuck" and to hell with Bell... I won't be there."

Smukler ended his playing career with the Boston Yanks during that season of 1944.

The Eagles won only two games in the seasons of '39 and '40, but they made the league sit up and take notice because of the passing accomplishments of Davey O'Brien, the mighty mite from Texas Christian, one of the smallest players ever to play among the huge boys in the cash-and-carry circuit.

Bell was so concerned lest little Davey be massacred and the Eagles' top drawing card suddenly trumped that he had him insured with Lloyds of London so that the Eagles were guaranteed \$1,500 for any game he missed through illness or injury. O'Brien never missed a game.

Little Davey had two truly exceptional days, both in losing causes. In 1939 in a game against the Bears, O'Brien played 59 of the 60 minutes and threw 36 passes, of which 21 were completed for 247 yards. Only one was intercepted. The Bears, big Joe Stydahar in particular, were so impressed by the little man's skill and courage that they'd pick him up and pat him on the back after each play.

A year later O'Brien staged a tremendous individual

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duel with Sammy Baugh, his predecessor as passing king at T.C.U. The game meant nothing to the Eagles and a divisional title to the Redskins, yet the favored Washingtonians had the devil's own time pulling a 13–6 decision out of the fire. Wee David, in a desperate attempt to slay the football Goliath facing him, threw a record total of sixty passes and completed thirty-three of them without a single one being intercepted. He played all but seventeen seconds of that bruising battle, and when he left the field, he received a standing ovation from the hostile Washington crowd as a valedictory to a brief but brilliant career.

O'Brien and Bell bowed out of the Philadelphia story together. After the 1940 season Bell sold one-half interest in the Eagles to his pal Art Rooney, who, in turn, disposed of the Steelers' franchise to Alexis Thompson. Then the franchises were switched, Thompson taking his to Philadelphia and Bell and Rooney moving theirs to Pittsburgh.

NEALE AND THE THOMPSONS 24

LEX THOMPSON, scion of a wealthy steel family, held control of the Eagles through 1948. He lost money, which didn't distress him too much because he had plenty; and he won two divisional titles and one world's championship, items he valued far more than money. He also got a broken leg in his first season as boss, but that didn't distress him too much, either, for he had had plenty of them, too.

Thompson took his first squad of Eagles to a training camp in Wisconsin, and it was there that he found himself embroiled in a game of touch football. On his side was huge Vic Sears, a first-year tackle from Oregon State, who was destined to remain as a star in pro football far beyond the Thompson era. Sears had wrenched a knee and so was out of uniform, but he couldn't resist the opportunity to have a little fun out of the game of "touch." Sears sent Thompson out for a pass and pointed one in his direction, but impishly threw it behind his boss's back. "Lex" twisted to attempt the catch, stumbled, and broke his leg.

That was an old story to Thompson. As a freshman at Yale in 1932 he was a member of the soccer team playing Harvard. Yale had the game safely tucked away in its trophy chest with a minute to play, but Thompson, charged with the old college try, wasn't willing to relax. He dashed down the field and delivered a sturdy kick at the ball just at the exact moment a big Harvardite was smitten with the same idea. Each kick landed—Thompson's on the ball, the other on "Lex's" shin, breaking the bone. He spent the next several months on crutches because, as one writer phrased it, the Thompson calcium deposits were not as rich as the Thompson bank deposits.

By way of celebrating his nineteenth birthday—again in the final minute of play—"Lex" was blocked out of a play in a game of lacrosse and again suffered a broken leg. Thompson was a noted bobsledder. He went down the

Thompson was a noted bobsledder. He went down the famous Cresta run at St. Moritz at the age of thirteen, and not even a succession of serious crack-ups could dim his interest in this hazardous pastime. A crash in 1937 wrenched his knee sufficiently to put him on crutches, another injured a kidney. The following year he had three major crack-ups in Switzerland and in 1940 he hit a tree at Lake Placid. This time he was paralyzed from the waist up for three days, but soon was zooming down the bob run once again.

"Lex" Thompson thus had proved himself able to "take it," the first requisite of the owner of a pro football franchise. He further demonstrated his qualifications by hiring a coach who knew pro football, Earle "Greasy" Neale, whom he had learned to admire as backfield coach at Yale. Shortly after purchasing the Eagles in December

of 1940, Thompson saw Neale in a restaurant in New Haven. "How'd you like to coach the pros?" he asked.

"I'd like it fine," Neale said. And thus was a winning combination made, albeit it was some time before it really began to click.

One incident typifies the kind of man "Greasy" Neale is. It occurred in 1912 when he arrived at West Virginia Wesleyan, and someone asked him what position he was going to try out for on the football team.

"I'm not going to try out for anything," Neale retorted with some heat. "I'm going to play end!"

He did, too. And he played it so well that in his debut as a college player he scored the touchdown that gave Wesleyan its first victory in history over West Virginia.

Confidence, Neale contends, is the greatest asset a football player can have. "If a player doesn't think he's the best man on the field," he says, "I don't want him on my team."

Neale's unique nickname was given him by a lad named Homer Stanton, who lived in a log cabin with his widowed mother in Neale's home town. Young Earle called Homer "Dirty" and in retaliation he became known as "Greasy."

His coaching career began way back in his high-school days in Parkersburg, West Virginia. Friction in school circles forced the coach to resign, and Neale, who acted older than his tender years, was named coach and captain. His team won one game, thanks to his own 70-yard touchdown run.

After finishing his football career at Wesleyan, he turned to baseball and played in the major leagues with

Cincinnati and the Phillies. He was a member of the world-champion Reds of 1919 and batted a lusty .357 in that series. He wasn't a "picture" ball player, but he was an effective one.

"Neale was what I'd call a 'sick cat' player," says Larry Goetz, the National League umpire. "You'd see him at the plate and you wouldn't give a nickel for him, but somehow in the clutch he'd bloop one over the infield or dribble one through the infield for a hit that won the game. Or he'd make an impossible catch to save the day."

He made one in the Polo Grounds one afternoon while with the Cincinnati Reds, spearing a line drive with one hand just before the ball would have hit the wall. Instead, Neale himself hit the wall so hard he was knocked cold. But he held onto the ball so tightly they had to pry it from his fingers.

While playing baseball, Neale was doubling in brass as a football coach, and on New Year's Day in 1922 he led his Washington and Jefferson team into the Rose Bowl, where it held favored California to a scoreless tie. He was always experimenting with the unorthodox and unusual, and in '22 introduced the first naked reverse. His W. and J. team was playing Lafayette, coached by Dr. "Jock" Sutherland. Neither had lost a game in two years.

Lafayette led, 13–0, at the half, but during the intermission Neale instructed his players in a new play. He told his quarterback to turn his back to the line of scrimmage and edge his way to the left after faking to a crossing halfback. The quarterback expected to be killed but, to his surprise and relief, found himself alone and free to run for a touchdown. He tried the same play again later with the same result, and W. and I. won, 14–13.

Neale first called this the "dance play" because of the motions of the quarterback.

This was the first season in which it was legal to run or pass for the extra point. Herb Kopf, who much later was to coach the Boston Yanks, turned this new rule into victory for Washington and Jefferson. Kopf noticed that the entire Lafayette team was massing to block the kick for the winning point.

"Make it good," he cried. This was the signal to abandon the kick and to throw a pass. The ball was snapped from center to Wayne Brenkert, who passed to Kopf for the point.

That triumph gave Neale a vast sense of satisfaction, for he and Sutherland never were friendly. Once years later Sutherland said to him: "'Greasy,' I don't think you like me."

"No, Doctor, I don't," Neale replied. "I admire you and I respect you. But I don't like you."

"I'm sorry," said "Jock," smiling. "I've always liked you and I like you all the more for what you just said."

Neale's experimenting caused another furor in 1925 when, coaching West Virginia, he introduced a shifting line defense in a game against Georgia. It sent Harry Mehre, the rival coach, scurrying to his old mentor, Knute Rockne, for the answer to a maneuver which had beaten a superior Georgia team. Incidentally, Neale also is credited with giving "Pop" Warner the triple-pass play and the fake reverse.

Neale first used the triple pass, which actually was a double reverse, against West Virginia in 1917. "Dad" Snedegar, a string-bean quarterback who stood 6–3 and weighed only 143 pounds, started off tackle from the

tailback position, but passed the ball off to the wingback, Myron Hymes. Hymes ran to the opposite side, then handed the ball to Ed Fisher, the end, who came back again in the direction in which Snedegar originally had started. The next day Neale met Warner on a train and diagrammed the play for him.

In 1930 Neale was coaching an independent pro team called the Ironton Tanks, which won four of five exhibition games against teams from the National League, much to the embarrassment of the big leaguers. The night before the game with Portsmouth, which finished second in its division, some fan asked "Greasy" if he intended to play. Neale allowed that he did.

"You're too old," the fan said, whereupon Neale made three wagers. He bet (1) that he would play, (2) that he would play the full sixty minutes, and (3) that he'd score a touchdown. He won all three, quite a feat for a chap of thirty-eight. But that is "Greasy" Neale.

When Neale and Thompson took over the Eagles, they had little except a franchise. "All we had," Neale recalls, "was half a football squad that Bell and Rooney didn't want. We didn't even have a number one or a number two draft choice, since Bell had traded away the rights to them before Thompson had bought the club."

Neale had always been an advocate of the single-wing offense, but after watching the Bears crush the Redskins under that 73–0 point avalanche in 1940, he decided his future lay in the T-formation. He obtained the movies of the Bear-Redskin game and studied them minutely, hourby-hour, week-by-week, month-by-month. Someone asked him if he'd borrowed his style of play from the Bears.

"No," he replied, "I stole it! I decided that any system

which could score seventy-three points in one game must be a pretty good system. So I studied those movies and lifted the plays right out of them and put 'em in my book!"

With the help of the collegiate statistics, Neale managed to draft twenty ball players for his first Eagle team. He hadn't scouted any of them and knew nothing about them except what the statistics told. Fortunately, he managed to sign eleven of them, an exceptionally high percentage.

Fortunately, too, one of the players left over from the Bell-Rooney regime was a back named Tommy Thompson, who had had the misfortune to lose the sight of an eye when hit by a stone thrown by a boyhood playmate. He had been a tailback at Tulsa. He now became Neale's great experiment as a T quarterback. "I should last twenty years at this job," Tommy enthused once. "If it were allowed, I'd take a rocking chair that the feld with me and just direct treffe with qual-

"I should last twenty years at this job," Tommy enthused once. "If it were allowed, I'd take a rocking chair onto the field with me and just direct traffic with such fellows as Steve Van Buren and 'Bosh' Pritchard running, and Joe Muha blocking."

Thompson didn't really hit his peak as a T pilot until after the war. In 1948 he completed 141 of 246 passes for 1,965 yards and 25 touchdowns; and in '47 he completed 106 for 1,680 yards and 16 touchdowns. Thompson's percentage of intercepted passes was extremely low. He made almost a fetish of keeping his throws out of enemy arms.

"An intercepted pass," he said, "is the opposing team's greatest defensive weapon. More games are lost by passes which go into the hands of the opposition than by long runs."

Thompson and Neale enjoyed a rare sense of mutual

understanding. They'd argue, but always in good humor.

Once the Eagles had the ball inside the enemy 20yard line and Neale signaled for a particular play. Thompson didn't think it the proper one and shook his head. "Greasy" was insistent.

In the huddle Thompson told his teammates: "If the old goat wants it, let him have it. And if anybody goes offside or misses a block, I'll shoot him."

The play went for a touchdown. Thompson trotted to the bench and shook hands with Neale. "Congratulations," he said, "you were lucky that time."

Neale, in his first season, quickly learned that it pays to keep your guard up at all times in pro football. The Eagles were battling the strong Green Bay Packers on even terms for a half and were trailing by only a touchdown as the game neared its end. A sustained drive swept the ball to the Green Bay 5-yard line, where it was first down and goal to go. Philadelphia fans were envisioning a tie score and a moral victory. Thompson passed and the ball dropped to the ground in the end zone.

"That's okay," Neale shouted to his players, "we still have three downs to go."

The echo of his words hadn't subsided when the referee walked out to the 20-yard line and set the ball down. Neale went charging onto the field. "What's going on?" he demanded.

"The ball touched the ground in the end zone," said the official, "and according to the rules it is a touchback."

"Greasy" knew the collegiate rule didn't read that way, and he hadn't had time to go over the pro code with a fine-tooth comb. He asked that "Curly" Lambeau, the Packer coach, be called in.

"Whatever he says, goes," said Neale.

"Why, 'Greasy,' said Lambeau in shocked surprise, "everybody knows that's a touchback."

And so the ball reverted to the Packers on the 20-yard line, and the Eagles' hopes for a tie ball game were dashed. As soon afterward as he could, Neale reached for a rulebook and discovered the official had erroneously deprived the Eagles of a scoring chance.

"Greasy" waved the book under Lambeau's nose. "Look," he shouted, "what it says in the book about a touchback. Do you see anything about losing possession of the ball when a pass is incomplete in the end zone?"

"Well, what do you know," clucked Lambeau. "It just goes to prove what I always say—a fellow is always learning something new in this pro-football business!"

THE EAGLES
FLY
HIGH 2

If a feminine fan had paused to powder her nose during one stage of the Eagles-Redskins game of 1942, she would have missed at least two touchdowns. The third period of that game, which went to Washington by 30-27 on Bob Masterson's field goal which flashed over the crossbar just as the final gun sounded to end a frantic afternoon of football, was one of the wildest on record. Four touchdowns were scored in a space of three-and-one-half minutes, three in a two-minute period, and two in only twenty-five seconds!

Andy Farkas launched the touchdown jubilee with a 20-yard scoring jaunt that put the Redskins ahead, 20-6, but "Reds" Pollock took the subsequent kickoff on his 3-yard line and scampered 97 yards. Dick Erdlitz converted.

The Eagles kicked off, and the 'Skins returned to a point near mid-field from where Sammy Baugh tossed a short pass to "Chug" Justice, who made the catch but fumbled when tackled. Rupert Pate, Eagle guard,

scooped up the loose ball, tucked it under his arm, and ran 53 yards to a touchdown, to which Erdlitz affixed the extra point that tied the score at 20–20.

But the fun wasn't over. The Eagles kicked off to Ray Hare, who sprinted straight up the middle of the field for 95 yards and another touchdown, to put the 'Skins out in front again!

The Eagles won only two of eleven games that year, and the next season, because of the wartime manpower shortage, merged with the Steelers to form a hybrid team known as the "Steagles," which won five and lost four. The following year the Eagles were back on their own with a nucleus of nineteen players left over from the "Steagles." Eight of them were 4-F and three had received honorable discharges from military service. Two of this group of nineteen were to rank with the game's all-time greats—tackle Albert "Whitey" Wistert and guard Frank "Bucko" Kilroy.

Wistert was the best of three brothers who made gridiron history at Michigan. At 215 pounds he was light for a pro tackle, but he was as aggressive as a fighting cock and an exceptional downfield blocker. He became the key man in the Eagle line and the team captain in its years of championship performance. He was a glutton for work, too. He'd drill with the Eagles in the morning, hurry over to Riverside, New Jersey, to coach the high-school team in the afternoon, and then dash back to Philadelphia to attend a night meeting with the Eagles. In his spare moments he laid the groundwork for a profitable insurance business.

Kilroy came to the team from Temple University, a chubby, pink-cheeked lad who looked more like a choir

boy than a football player. Appearances were never more deceiving. During the next decade Kilroy earned a reputation as one of the roughest, most durable and capable defensive players in the business. He came by his flaming competitive spirit honestly, for his father was decorated for heroism by four governments during World War I and his great-uncle Matt was a stellar pitcher for the old Athletics.

The step that really started the Eagles on the highway to success, however, was the drafting of Steve Van Buren, a halfback from Louisiana State University. Van Buren was born in Tela, Honduras, of American parents who died while he was young. Steve was raised by his grandparents in New Orleans, and it was there he began to take an interest in football. He played end as a senior in high school, but was switched to the backfield as a collegian because of his tremendous driving power.

When the Eagles opened their season against the Cardinals, Van Buren was suffering from an attack of grippe, but was in the starting line-up. The first time he was handed the ball he took out around his right end and kept going for 47 yards and a touchdown. Neale promptly pulled him out of the game, and he sat on the bench until the fourth quarter when he reappeared for five minutes. In those five minutes he carried the ball three times for 20, 10, and 8 yards, then caught a pass from Roy Zimmerman for a touchdown. After that display he returned to the bench and his sick bed.

Van Buren's inaugural performance was typical of his ability to rise to any occasion. A broken leg sustained in an exhibition game put him out of action in 1952, but during the eight previous seasons he established nearly all the mileage records in the book. He carried the ball 1,320 times for 5,860 yards, an average of 4.4 yards per carry. In a game against the New York Bulldogs in 1949 he carried the ball 35 times, a mark topped only by Harry Newman of the Giants fifteen years earlier. In '49 Van Buren carried the ball 263 times for 1,146 yards, both league records. In 1945 he scored 18 touchdowns, 16 of them by running plays.

There was nothing fancy about Van Buren's running. He simply powered his way through and over tacklers, and most of his yardage was amassed on a straight shot over or outside his right tackle. His thrusts were so unstoppable he was an almost automatic selection for an All-League halfback position until he was slowed by insigning in '50 and '51. juries in '50 and '51.

If Van Buren had a fault, it was running with his head down, a habit common with ball carriers who like to blast their way forward. Neale attempted to correct him, and before sending him into a game with the Packers, advised him to keep his head up so he could rackers, advised nim to keep his head up so he could see where he was going. A few plays later Steve came out of the game with a huge "mouse" on one cheekbone and the makings of a black eye.

"I've just found out," he told Neale, pointing to the eye, "why I've been keeping my head down all these years!"

Van Buren was at his best in the clutch. When yards were needed, he'd get 'em. Neale was visibly worried before a Redskin game in 1949 and was fretting so obviously that Steve finally asked: "If I promise to get one hundred yards on the ground Sunday, will you stop worrying?"

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Neale nodded. And Van Buren not only was as good as his word, he was better. He doubled the yardage he had promised.

With Van Buren leading the way in a brilliant freshman year, the Eagles of 1944 were soaring, but not quite high enough. They were unbeaten in their division, but finished as also-rans because of two ties and a 28–7 defeat at the hands of the Bears. The next year they defeated the Redskins, 16–0, to tie them for the divisional title, only to be upset the next week by the Giants, whom they had beaten soundly earlier. The score was 28–21, and the Redskins took the title, losing to the Rams in the play-off.

The 1946 season was a disappointment but in '47 the Eagles at long last won the Eastern divisional title. Tommy Thompson was back from the war and on the beam once again with his passes. Van Buren was running in his copyrighted fashion, and he had backfield help in speedy "Bosh" Pritchard and Russ Craft and rugged Joe Muha. Pete Pihos had come up from Indiana to take one end opposite Jack Ferrante, a veteran who didn't have the benefit of college football training. And a vast amount of help came, rather unexpectedly, from Alex Wojciechowicz, veteran center who had been acquired the previous year from the Lions on waivers. "Wojie" was like a bloodhound in scenting an opposing team's play and being in the right spot at the right time to smear it for a loss. Like good wine, he seemed to improve with age, and he was thirty-one when the Eagles obtained him.

Another newcomer who played a vital role in the rise of the Eagles was Vic Lindskog, Stanford center, who

joined up in 1944 and remained, frequently playing fiftyfive or more minutes a game, until he joined the coaching staff in 1952.

The Eagles won their sectional crown the hard way, beating the powerful Packers, 28–14, to tie the Steelers and then beating the Pittsburghers, 21–0, in the divisional play-off. It was in the game against the Packers that Van Buren picked up 96 yards to eclipse the single-season record for yards gained rushing, a mark set by Beattie Feathers of the Bears in 1934. Steve also shocked the Packers with a 101-yard kickoff return, only to have the play nullified by a clipping penalty.

The play-off against the Cardinals in Chicago was

The play-off against the Cardinals in Chicago was the first of three championship games in which the Eagles were to be involved in as many years, and in each the weather conditions were abominable. The first was played on an icy field, the second in a blinding blizzard, the third in a torrential downpour. If and when the Eagles fight their way to another championship, they fully expect it to be in a tornado.

The Cardinal game touched off a ruckus over the type of cleats worn by the Eagles. They were the conventional, hard-rubber cleats which had been worn down and then turned on a lathe and shortened to afford better footing on an icy surface. The Eagles said they had worn the same cleats in two previous games, but the Cardinals protested, claiming they had heard the Eagles filing the cleats to dangerous sharpness.

A half-hour before the kickoff Umpire Harry Robb inspected the cleats and said, "There's nothing wrong with them." Fifteen minutes later, while the Eagles were warming up, Robb informed them that Hugh L. Ray,

supervisor of officials, had declared them illegal. The Eagles, in turn, protested vigorously, claiming Ray had not inspected the cleats personally and, besides, they had no time to change footgear.

During the first five minutes of play the Cardinals, clad in sneakers, twice requested Referee Bill Downs to inspect the cleats of an Eagle player. Both times the Eagles were penalized 5 yards for wearing "illegal equipment," and the individual at fault was banished to the bench for new shoes.

The Cardinal defense that day held Van Buren in check as he seldom had been, yielding him only 26 yards in eighteen trips, but meanwhile Thompson was setting records with his passing. He tossed one scoring pass of 53 yards to Pat McHugh and set up two other touchdowns with his bull's-eye throws. In all he completed 27 of 44 passes for 297 yards, both new records. His brilliance availed nothing, however, because the Cardinals kept breaking loose for long touchdown runs.

Once Charley Trippi tore away for 44 yards to score from scrimmage, and later he lugged a punt 75 yards to the goal line. Twice Elmer Angsman raced through for runs of 70 yards to bring the final score to 28–21. His second and game-winning run came just after Muha's magnificent punt had gone out-of-bounds on the Chicago 10-yard line. Paul Christman fooled the Eagles with a pass to Trippi on the 30, then Angsman ripped up the middle and outran McHugh to the goal line.

and outran McHugh to the goal line.

Neale, in those tense days of championship and near-championship football, installed a bonus offer of \$5.00 for each enemy pass intercepted. Once, in Washington, halfback Ernie Steele made a desperate lunge for a

Sammy Baugh pass. He almost held it, but the ball slipped off his fingertips as he struck the ground near the side line where Neale was prancing up and down, waving a five-spot and chanting:

"A-tisket, a-tasket, you lost this, you lost this!"

"A-tisket, a-tasket, you lost this, you lost this!"

The season of 1948 started on a discouraging note as the Eagles lost one and tied one, but then the team began to roll and swept through eight straight opponents to clinch a second divisional title. With the crown safely tucked away and with Van Buren and Craft side-lined with injuries, they wound up the regular schedule with a totally unexpected defeat at the hands of the Boston Yanks, 37–14. Most notable victory was a thumping 45–0 score piled up against the Redskins with Van Buren making three of the touchdowns and the Eagles rolling up a total of twenty-eight first downs to equal what was then the record then the record.

The final game with Boston added Steele and Jay McDowell, tackle, to the injured list, but both were in the starting line-up, as was Craft, when the whistle sounded for the championship game against the Cardinals. For for the championship game against the Cardinals. For a time, however, it seemed the whistle would be delayed for a day or perhaps a week. Philadelphia, on Sunday, December 19, 1948, was staggered by one of the worst storms in history. As the blizzard grew in intensity near kickoff time, Commissioner Bell left it up to the players themselves whether or not the game should be postponed. The boys, keyed to such a fever pitch they ignored the storm, agreed to play; but before they could do so they had to pitch in and help the ground crew remove the tarpaulin from the field. The covering had been buried so deep in snow the groundkeepers couldn't budge it so deep in snow the groundkeepers couldn't budge it.

THE STORY OF PRO FOOTBALL

Despite the impossible conditions a crowd of 36,309 huddled around the frosty arena in Shibe Park. In a twinkling after the tarpaulin was removed, the field was covered with snow and the yard lines and markers completely obliterated. It was a miracle that Ronald Gibbs, the referee, and his crew of officials could keep track of where the ball was and what was going on.

At the very outset the Eagles gambled on a long pass, and it clicked from Thompson to Ferrante for 65 yards only to be recalled because of an off-side penalty. After that the teams sloshed and mushed and struggled, punting frequently and waiting for a break. It came at last in the fourth period when Kilroy plopped on a fumble by Ray Mallouf, the Cardinal quarterback, on Chicago's 17-yard line. From there the Eagles boomed to the only score of the day, Van Buren bucking the final 5 yards and Cliff Patton kicking the extra point. The Eagles were knocking at touchdown's door, on the Cardinal 2-yard line, when the game ended.

Van Buren carried for 98 yards on 26 trips and Pritchard for 67 on 16, but it was Thompson, the passer, who really surprised. Tommy completed only 2 of 12 passes, but he ran 11 times for 50 yards on sneaks and fake pitchouts, gaining more yards than the Cardinals' great trio of Trippi, Harder, and Angsman.

Owner "Lex" Thompson missed seeing that game and the realization of his dream—a championship for Philadelphia. He was in a New York hospital recovering from an appendectomy. One month later he sold his team and was out of the football business. He had lost money regularly, but he had won a championship.

Thompson's interests were purchased in January of

1949 by one hundred Philadelphians headed by James P. Clark, wealthy trucker. Each held one \$3,000 share and the setup had an extra \$50,000 as working capital.

The Eagles of 1949 added a powerful young lineman

The Eagles of 1949 added a powerful young lineman in Chuck Bednarik, Penn's All-American center, who quickly developed into one of the league's top line-backers. But of all the squad members, the busiest undoubtedly was Otis Douglas, thirty-eight-year-old tackle who doubled as trainer. Douglas also wrestled a bit, served as a coach at Drexel, ran a boys' summer camp, had an oyster bed about ready to produce on a commercial scale, was a licensed airplane pilot, a house builder, a house mover, a plumber, carpenter, bricklayer, and dynamiter. As one teammate put it: "The guy wastes no time sleeping!"

The Eagles wasted no time, either, in salting away a third consecutive Eastern title with a record of eleven victories in twelve games as Van Buren bettered his own ground-gaining record. They met the Western champions, the Rams, in a drenching rain at Los Angeles. The weather put a severe crimp in the Rams' passing attack led by Bob Waterfield, so the bull-like rushes of Van Buren kept the Eagles in possession of the ball much of the time. He carried thirty-one times for a net of 196 yards, a feat that caused Neale to say: "Maybe 'Red' Grange was better than Van Buren was today. Maybe Bronko Nagurski was better. But I'll bet nobody ever ran better than Van Buren did in this mud."

Van Buren didn't account for either touchdown in that 14–0 Eagle victory, however. Pihos scored the first on a 31-yard pass from Thompson. Ed Skladany, at end, blocked a punt and recovered for the other touchdown.

One of the defensive standouts of that team was Fran Reagan, one of Penn's all-time football greats. He had played five games as a pro with the Giants in 1941 before he was called into active duty with the Marines. He returned in '46 but in the title game between the Giants and Bears suffered a broken wrist and had some

He returned in '46 but in the title game between the Giants and Bears suffered a broken wrist and had some facial bones shattered. The Eagles secured him in '49 as a punter and defensive specialist, a role he filled until he joined the coaching staff in 1952.

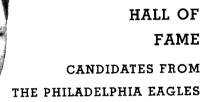
The first game of the 1950 season was the "big one" football fans had been waiting for. It brought together the Eagles, champions of the established National League, and the Cleveland Browns, champs of the defunct All America Conference. The battle of champions, however, was scarcely a contest. Van Buren was hurt and didn't play. The Eagles' offensive burden fell on the slender shoulders of Clyde "Smackover" Scott and he, too, was hurt severely early in the game. The Eagles promptly fell apart, and the Browns coasted to a 38–10 victory. That defeat marked the end of an era, for the Eagles never fully recovered, losing half of their twelve games, five of them by a combined total of only 18 points.

One of the lighter moments of the season came during the training camp grind at Hershey, Pennsylvania. It seems that Walt "Piggy" Barnes, giant guard, had a \$300 set of china choppers that were his pride and joy. Before entering scrimmage he handed them for safe keeping to Ed Hogan, Jr., fourteen, son of the Eagles' able publicitor. To be sure nothing happened to them, young Ed wrapped them in a jersey—but failed to notice that another Eagle soon grabbed up that jersey, donned it, and swept into action on the field.

and swept into action on the field.



Steve Van Buren Back



Vic Sears
Tackle



Davey O'Brien
Back



Vic Lindskog Center



Jack Ferrante
End



Tommy Thompson
Back

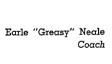


Abisha "Bosh" Pritchard
Back



HALL OF
FAME
CANDIDATES FROM
THE PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

Joe Muha Back





Albert "Whitey" Wistert

Tackle







Frank Kilroy

Barnes, an ex-weight-lifter and reputed to be one of the ten strongest men in the world, might have made mincemeat of little Ed had it not been the young man's birthday. As it was, the two joined in a diligent search which was rewarded when the false teeth were found in perfect condition. Thus was young Ed Hogan able to eat his fourteenth birthday cake. And "Piggy" was able to eat. Period.

As the Eagles toppled from the heights, so did "Greasy" Neale. In February of 1951 he was released from his contract, which still had a year to run, and "Bo" McMillin was hired to succeed him. McMillin, however, already had been stricken with a fatal illness. He became violently ill while watching the Eagles in their opening game against the Cardinals. He returned to lead them against San Francisco, but was ordered to the hospital the next day, turning the reins over to Wayne Millner, his assistant. Millner became head coach on October 16, but couldn't withstand the pressure and resigned early in 1952. He was replaced by Jim Trimble, another McMillin aide, who kept the Eagles in the running for the divisional title until the last day of the season—a feat that won him an accolade as "Coach of the Year" and a new contract.

DRISCOLL, NEVERS, AND THE CARDINALS

26

THE CHICAGO CARDINALS haven't enjoyed too many moments in the spotlight, but in the matter of longevity no team in professional football can compare with them. They had their inception back in 1899 and have been active continuously ever since. Chris O'Brien and his brother Pat organized them as a neighborhood team on Chicago's Southwest Side and they first were known as the Morgan A.C., playing on a field at Fifty-second and Morgan streets. Eventually the name was changed to the Normals after they moved their home grounds to Normal Park at Sixty-third and Racine.

Still later, Chris O'Brien stumbled upon a bargain in bright-red jerseys, so the team became known as the Racine Cardinals because of the color of the uniforms and the location of the park. This led to no end of confusion, however, when a team from Racine, Wisconsin, also called the Cardinals, entered the old American Association. It was then that O'Brien dropped the prefix "Racine" in favor of "Chicago."

Marston Smith was the coach at that time, and his line-up included such names as Lennie Sachs, Willis Brennan, "Gob" Buckeye, "Ping" Bodie, and Nick McInerney. The pay was often a paltry \$5.00 a game and, as O'Brien loved to point out later: "Everyone wanted to play and nobody wanted to sit on the bench, so sometimes you had to pay more money for a bench warmer than for a fellow who played sixty minutes."

O'Brien's master stroke as he sought to build the Cardinals as an attraction in the league was the signing in 1920, at a wage of \$300 a game, of John L. "Paddy" Driscoll, former Northwestern backfield luminary who had starred with the famed Great Lakes eleven of 1918.

Driscoll had played baseball with the Cubs and was serving as an assistant coach of the football team at his Alma Mater in 1919. The owner of the Hammond pro team chanced to ask Leo Fischer, Chicago sports writer, if he thought Driscoll would play baseball at Hammond.

"Baseball?" scoffed Fischer. "Why not get him to play football?" So it came about that Driscoll was approached with a proposition calling for \$50 a game.

"Make it \$75," said "Paddy." The Hammond promoter stuck to his guns, so "Paddy" finally agreed to the \$50 fee. In his first game against a Pine Village team that included Jimmy Phelan, he ran 63 yards for a touchdown and kicked a field goal.

"Before I even took a shower I demanded \$75 for my next game," Driscoll chuckles. "I got it, too."

In that next game, against the Cornell-Hamburgs, "Paddy" made one of the greatest drop kicks in history, but he has no recollection of it. He had been hit on the head during a pile-up, and no one realized he was "out

on his feet" when he called for a forward pass. To the complete surprise of his teammates he didn't pass, but booted a 55-yard drop kick squarely over the crossbar.

In 1920 the Cardinals and the Staley A.C. met in the first game of what was to become Chicago's most spirited football series. The Cards won it 7–6 on a kick by Driscoll, but when a rematch was arranged, Driscoll was on the side lines and the Cards lost 10–0. The feud between the teams grew in intensity in 1921 when the Staleys moved to Chicago and claimed the championship for that season.

"We've been trying all year to get a game with the Staleys," O'Brien wailed, adding that the Staleys could claim the league title but that the Cardinals would claim the championship of the city of Chicago. Finally the two rivals met in mid-December and struggled to a scoreless tie in the snow as Driscoll missed one drop kick and Arnold Horween missed two.

Arnold and Ralph Horween, former Harvard stars, played with the Cards under the name of McMahon because their parents didn't want them to play professional football. To make things more confusing for Cardinal fans, there was a J. McMahon on the team, too. He actually was Johnny Hurlburt, ex-Chicago back, who took the alias because A. A. Stagg, his collegiate coach, was an implacable foe of pro football at the time.

After that season Driscoll entered into an agreement with George Halas and "Dutch" Sternaman to join the Staleys, which were becoming the Bears, each to have a third interest in the ball club. Driscoll still has a copy of the written agreement. However, President Joe Carr ruled that "Paddy" rightfully belonged to the Cardinals, so he

remained with them through 1925, serving as player-coach for two years.

By way of making the Messrs. Halas and Sternaman doubly unhappy over the turn of events, "Paddy" personally kicked the Bears into defeat in two games in 1922, making two drop kicks for a 6–0 decision and kicking three more in a later fray that went to the Cards, 9–0. He kept right on kicking and running and passing the Cardinals to victory until they were declared champions in 1925 after adding a couple of games to their schedule to thwart the challenge of Pottsville—a procedure that brought considerable adverse comment from the press, a fine of \$1,000 against the Cardinal management, and a batch of heartaches among Pottsville fans who thought their heroes had won a clear title by beating the Cardinals 21–7 in a game that was press-agented as one for the championship.

Among the players who helped Driscoll fashion an 11-2-1 record that year were "Red" Dunn, Eddie Anderson, Fred Gillies, and Roger "Ike" Mahoney, a halfback who perhaps was the only player who ever had a song written about him. The Cardinal Quartet, a barbershop harmony group that used to sing at all Cardinal home games, had a special number entitled "Over the Line with Ike Mahoney." Dunn is the same who later starred with Green Bay; Anderson went on to coaching fame; and Gillies became a leading steel executive.

As a player Gillies, former Cornell tackle, played nine years in the league and coached the Cards in one season. For years he has served the Bears as a dollar-a-year coach. Uniforms, back in 1925, weren't tailored to measure and the pants were ordered strictly by waistline measure-

ment, a fact that worked considerable hardship on Gillies' knees. His legs were so long that the pants wouldn't cover the knees, so even on icy and snowy fields Fred might as well have been playing in kilts.

On October 11, 1925, Driscoll wrote his name in the record books by booting four drop kicks for field goals in a game against Columbus. The kicks traveled 23, 18, 50, and 35 yards. "Paddy" also had a hand, or a foot, in a 9-6 triumph over Green Bay. He kicked one field goal and further distinguished himself in a unique sort of way by fumbling a pass from Dunn squarely into the hands of Eddie Anderson, who ran for a touchdown.

When Coach Norm Barry's Cardinals lost that twelfth game of 1925 to Pottsville, a team whose line-up included such names as Walter French, Herb and Russ Stein, Charley Berry, and Tony Latone, Pottsville celebrated a title because of a 10–2 record compared to the Cardinals' 9–2–1. But they celebrated without thought of Chris O'Brien's guile. He simply added two easy games to the schedule, won them, and claimed the crown.

This bit of monkey business stirred Don Maxwell to editorialize as follows in the Chicago Tribune:

After announcing that last Sunday's game with Pottsville would decide the pro league title, the Cardinals were beaten. The public took them at their word and assumed they had lost the title.

Now it seems that the championship game didn't mean anything. Chris O'Brien, with a natural desire to win the title—whatever that means—has scheduled two extra games for his team.

One was played yesterday with Milwaukee. Admittance was free. But the game was a farce. The Cards won 59–0. It wasn't a football game, it was a practice. Certainly a weird game to base a championship on.

Saturday the Cards play again. This time they plan to walk

over Hammond and grab another hold on the flag. The game will be better than yesterday's for Hammond is a stronger team than Milwaukee, but the motive of the Cardinals is the same.

Meanwhile Pottsville is celebrating a title victory. The town is decorated with bunting and members of the team have been given gold medals. They think they have won the league championship. They don't know Mr. O'Brien.

Pro football has a chance to get a firm footing. Persons who never thought of attending a professional game were lured by the fame of Grange. They saw finished football and were pleased. They planned to go again.

Are the bosses of the pro teams trying to discourage these new fans? Pro football has the players. What it lacks is organization and bosses with common sense.

The extra game against Milwaukee brought additional and even more costly repercussions, for it was discovered that four high-school players had appeared in the Milwaukee line-up. In taking disciplinary action President Joe Carr fined the Milwaukee club \$500 and gave the management ninety days in which to dispose of its assets and retire from the league. The Cardinals were fined \$1,000 and placed on probation for one year. Said Carr: "I could not find where the management of the Cardinal team had guilty knowledge of the status of the boys who played, until after the game had been played."

It was during this controversial season of 1925 that "Red" Grange made his pro debut in a scoreless tie with the Cardinals, "Paddy" Driscoll keeping the Illini redhead in check by punting away from him. He punted twenty-five times and only three times did the ball go to Grange. On the other occasions it went out-of-bounds or to Joe Sternaman. "Kicking to Grange," Driscoll explained, "was like grooving one to Babe Ruth."

As the teams were leaving the field at the close of play, a large portion of the crowd booed lustily. "Paddy" paused to talk to his wife.

"I hate to hear the fans boo a young man like Grange," he said. "It wasn't his fault."

"Don't feel sorry for Grange," Mrs. Driscoll replied. "They're booing you!"

If Chris O'Brien caused the league some headaches by his schedule antics in 1925, he more than atoned the next year. Indeed, there are many who believe he actually saved the league and killed off C. C. Pyle's new "outlaw" circuit by steadfastly refusing to join it despite some flattering offers. O'Brien wasn't a wealthy man, and to help save the National League and finance himself over the crisis, he sold his greatest asset—"Paddy" Driscoll—to his greatest rivals, the Bears. The price was said to be \$10,000. And what did Driscoll do in his first game against his old Cardinal teammates? He kicked three field goals, one of 50 yards, scored the only touchdown, and added the extra point!

O'Brien never could locate a back to take Driscoll's place in the hearts of South Side football fandom, but he did strengthen his line tremendously by adding Fred "Duke" Slater, huge Negro tackle from Iowa, who became a Chicago judge and one of football's all-time greats.

Paul Minick, ex-Iowa guard, recalls the day he broke in against Slater, who was already a pro veteran.

"My future, the money I needed, was dependent on my showing in this first game," he says. "'Duke' knew this and since his team already was winning when I entered the game, he took pains to make me look good. When the game was over, people told me how I had played Slater

even. But I knew it was just another example of 'Duke's' kindness of heart."

In July of 1929 O'Brien sold the Cardinals to Dr. David J. Jones, Chicago city physician, for a reported \$25,000, and the good doctor immediately dashed off a revitalizing prescription—he signed Ernie Nevers.

Nevers, the great Stanford fullback of 1925, was a one-man football team. He could do everything well. He could run, he could kick, he could pass, and he could play on defense. To top it off, he was an iron man. "Pop" Warner always maintained Emie was the finest player not only that he ever coached, but that he ever saw.

"As a high-school lad at Superior, Wisconsin," Nevers says, "I didn't know a football from a squash. Irl Tubbs, the coach, used me for live bait in the tackling drills. I used to stand in the sawdust pit and let the other kids tackle and block me, and I wasn't allowed to move around. The only difference between me and a regular dummy was that I could talk and didn't have a rope around my neck."

Nevers learned the game fast enough to win All-American acclaim in spite of bad luck. In 1925 he played only three minutes for Stanford because of a broken leg. He was on the mend and ready to face California when he broke an anklebone in practice. Stanford went to the Rose Bowl that New Year's Day and, a week before the game, the cast was removed from Nevers' ankle. Seven days later Ernie played the entire sixty minutes against Notre Dame and carried the ball thirty-four times for a net gain of 114 yards.

In his first pro season he threw seventeen consecutive completed passes against Pottsville and scored 28 points, and against Hartford that same year he kicked five field goals in as many attempts in mud and rain. In twentynine consecutive games at one stretch of his career he missed only twenty-seven minutes of action and in his last campaign with the Cardinals in 1931 he played the full sixty minutes of nineteen games.

Phil Handler, who served the Cards as player and coach for almost two decades, recalls an incident in 1931 which illustrates Nevers' iron physique. The team was playing Brooklyn and was deep in its own territory. Nevers had carried the ball and was on the ground.

"The whistle had blown," says Handler, "but some Brooklyn player crashed into Ernie and his knees ground into Ernie's back. We took time out, but when our two minutes were up, Nevers was still unconscious. The referee told us we could take two more minutes getting Nevers off the field.

"Another Cardinal player and I hoisted Nevers between us and started for the bench. We were almost there when Ernie shook himself, looked at us dazedly, and mumbled: "What's going on? What are you doing to me?"

"He wouldn't listen when we told him he was hurt and that we were taking him out of the game. He pulled away from us, crying, 'No, you are *not* taking me out.'

"There was no use arguing with him. He was determined to play. And how he did! He called his own signals for sixteen consecutive plays until he scored a touchdown!"

Nevers' greatest game, from the standpoint of personal satisfaction, was played against the Bears at Comiskey Park on Thanksgiving Day, 1929. The Cardinals won, 40–6, and Nevers scored every point for his team, getting six touchdowns and kicking 4 extra points.

Dr. Jones had guided the Cardinals through four seasons of indifferent success and expected to lead them for many more years when, one evening in 1933, he attended a dinner party aboard the private yacht of Charles W. Bidwill, through whose help George Halas had kept control of the Bears. In the course of casual conversation Bidwill asked, "Want to sell your ball club?"

The doctor agreed he might, provided he could get his price, for these were depression days.

"What's your price?" Bidwill asked.

"Fifty thousand dollars," Dr. Jones replied and promptly dismissed the matter from his mind. A few days later the phone rang.

"It's a deal," said Bidwill. And for a moment Dr. Jones wasn't sure what he was talking about.

Thus did professional football acquire one of its most colorful and enthusiastic owners, a man whose friendships ranged from hoodlums to presidents, a man who had two confessed aims in life-to win a world's football championship and the Kentucky Derby—and who did neither, although the Cardinals did move to a title in the very year of his death.

Bidwill was a man of many facets and many interests. At the time he bought the Cardinals he was president of the Chicago Stadium Operating Company, a director of the American Turf Association, secretary of the Chicago Business Men's Racing Association, president of a printing company, and owner of a racing stable. Later he bought controlling interest in the Hawthorne race track.

The son of a Chicago alderman, he was born and raised within a few blocks of the old Cubs' park and as a young-ster hobnobbed with such baseball heroes as Joe Tinker, Jimmy Sheckard, Orvie Overall, and "Wildfire" Schulte. He often expressed a wish to own a major-league baseball team, but his only venture into baseball came in 1926 when he and Cliff Trimble purchased the American Giants for \$35,000. In their first season they cleared more than \$60,000.

"I guess that'll show those big leaguers," Bidwill chortled.

Bidwill liked to live around men of the sports world, and for an educated lawyer who could toss eight-dollar words around at will, he often dropped into a "dese-demand-dose" lingo out of the side of his mouth. "Where," he'd ask, "do you find better guys?"

As boss of the Cardinals, Bidwill had a terrible time curing himself of a profound, long-standing devotion to the Bears. Tis said he often rooted for the Bears against his own team in the years when the Bears were winning titles and the Cards were going no place in particular. In 1941 the Bears, needing a victory in the final game

of the season to earn a play-off position, were forced to rally in the closing minutes to snatch a 34–24 decision from the Cards. Jimmy Conzelman, the Cardinal coach, was expecting a pat on the back and some words of approbation for the team's fine showing. Instead, Bidwill was wiping nervous perspiration from his forehead as he entered the clubhouse.

"Whew!" he breathed. "That was a close one, wasn't it?"

As the Cardinals began to develop into title contenders under the spirited leadership of Conzelman in the mid-forties, Bidwill's loyalty switched and he became his own team's most boisterous rooter.

"I'm getting over it," he said of his Bear loyalty after the Cards had beaten the Bears in 1946. "I knew it when I saw Marshall Goldberg score the last touchdown. That Halas can put me down alongside Lambeau, Owen, and Marshall right now." Those three were Papa Bear's most bitter foes.

Paul Schissler, Milan Creighton, and Nevers preceded Conzelman as Cardinal coach under Bidwill's management. None could find the championship formula although they produced good teams with such players as Frank McNally, Harry Field, Bree Cuppoletti, Pete Mehringer, Doug Russell, George Grosvenor, Hal Pangle, Bill Smith, Billy Wilson, Pat Coffee, Conway Baker, and Mike Mikulak, a great defensive player who came out of Oregon and announced to Nagurski that he and not the "Bronk" was henceforth the league's best fullback.

Gaynell "Gus" Tinsley, a great end and nephew of Jess Tinsley, an old Cardinal tackle, scored one of the most unusual touchdowns in history during the Creighton regime. It happened late one cold day in '37 at Wrigley Field. Darkness had settled until it was impossible, from the stands, to see the players save for the white pants on the Cardinals. Fans were building bonfires in the stands for illumination and warmth. Suddenly from near one goal line a pair of white pants streaked madly toward the opposite goal. A moment later the teams left the field. Investigation by puzzled sports writers revealed that Tinsley had run 96 yards for a touchdown on an end-

Investigation by puzzled sports writers revealed that Tinsley had run 96 yards for a touchdown on an end-around while the Bears were wondering what had become of the ball. At that point the officials awarded the Cards the extra point without bothering with the formality of kicking it. Then the whole thing was called off with almost three minutes of playing time remaining.

Tinsley was the league's leading pass receiver in 1938 but quit the next year because of differences with Nevers, returning in '40 to wind up a short but brilliant career after suffering a knee injury. In '38 he caught forty-one passes and scored on runs of 98 and 97 yards on the payoff end of aerials.

Cuppoletti, a chunky guard, drew his football inspiration from Johnny Blood. As a boy in 1924 he climbed a fence at Virginia, Minnesota, to see Blood play with the Duluth Eskimos. He was so impressed with Johnny's performance that he determined to become a football player himself. Finally, in 1936, he played against Blood. As they passed, "Coop" shouted: "Hiya, old folks. Go kinda easy on my sons when they come up to this league, will you?"

Blood didn't seem to appreciate the humor.

Jimmy Conzelman, the Moses who led the Cardinals out of the football wilderness, had known pro football

since 1920 when he played with the Staleys. In 1921 he joined the Rock Island Independents as a player, but during the course of a game with the Staleys, Walter Flanagan, the Rock Island owner, sent in word via a substitute that the coach had been fired and Conzelman was to take over. He thus became the only coach to take command in the middle of a game in which he was playing. In 1923 he was player and coach for the Milwaukee Badgers, he later served a time as combination owner-player-coach of the Detroit Panthers, and then as player-coach with the Providence Steam Bollers.

Conzelman's versatility is amazing. He is a pianist and composer, a lyricist, an author, a raconteur, and a masterful speaker. The commencement-day address he delivered at the University of Dayton during World War II was read into the Congressional Record and became required reading at West Point.

Jimmy of the silvery hair, twinkling fingers, and infectious humor first took command of the Cardinals in 1940 for a three-year stretch, then resigned to become assistant to Don Barnes, president of the St. Louis Browns baseball team. Phil Handler took over, and in 1944 the Cards were merged with Pittsburgh as a wartime measure. Handler was the boss the following season, then dropped back to an assistant's role as Conzelman returned for three years, two divisional titles, and one world championship.

When he regained the helm, Jimmy discovered he had a "dream backfield," a combination for which a coach would wait a lifetime. Part of it he had helped develop during his first term as boss of the Big Red, as Chicago learned to call the Cardinals. That part was Marshall Goldberg, called "Mad Marshall" during his collegiate days of All-American glory at Pitt. He came to the Cards in 1939 and spent most of the season on the bench watching his teammates take licking after licking. Coach Nevers said the Cards had to pass to win and Goldberg wasn't a passer, so

Goldberg was really a "Mad" Marshall in November, 1939, when he announced his decision to quit football. But when Conzelman took charge he changed his mind, turning out to be not only a dangerous offensive threat but an exceptional defensive player. He even learned to pass with fair precision so that in the first three games of 1941 he completed five of six passes for 100 yards and a touchdown.

Goldberg made more farewell appearances than the divine Sarah Bernhardt. He retired for the second time after the championship season of 1947, but came back to play in the All-Star game the next fall. That, he said, was his definite swan song. But the lure of the game proved too strong, and he came back again to finish the season before making his retirement stick.

The team that Conzelman welded into a championship unit in 1947 had two exceptional pass-catching ends in Billy Dewell and Mal Kutner; one of the game's great tackles in Stan Mauldin; potent guards in Garrard "Buster" Ramsey, Plato Andros, Ham Nichols, and Loyd Arms; three top-flight centers in Vince Banonis, Bill Blackburn, and Bill Campbell; and, of course, the "dream backfield" of "Pitching" Paul Christman at quarter, Marlin "Pat" Harder at full, and Charley Trippi and Goldberg at the halves, with Elmer Angsman as replacement for the aging Goldberg.

Next to Goldberg, Christman was dean of this explosive combination. He joined the Cards in 1945 after his release from the Navy and at a time when the Cards had lost twenty-eight games in a row. His passing quickly restored them to life, for in five years with the Big Red he threw 1,014 passes and completed 453 for 6,751 yards and 51 touchdowns. In the title year of 1947 he hit on 138 of 301 for 2,191 yards and 17 touchdowns.

The game-breaker of the unit, however, was Trippi, the former Georgia All American whom Bidwill had snatched from the hands of the rival All America Conference. The National League was fearful that Trippi might be grabbed by the new league, but Bidwill scoffed at these fears. "Stop worrying," he advised. "I'm not worried, am I? Trippi isn't worried, either. He's a Cardinal, I tell you."

Following the Sugar Bowl game on January 1, 1947, in which he starred, Trippi was dining with his victorious teammates. He looked up late in the evening to see Dan Topping, owner of the All America Yankees, and Phil Handler of the Cards. Each was covering an exit to the ballroom and keeping an eye on Trippi, as well as each other. Chuckling, Trippi turned to his wife.

"Come on, honey," he said, "let's go home, so they can go home."

A few days later the phone rang in Trippi's room. The caller was an agent of the Yankees.

"I'd like to talk to Charley Trippi," the man said.

"You'll have to speak to his lawyer," said the voice at Trippi's end of the line. "Just a minute and I'll call him."

The Yankee agent promptly launched into a glowing dissertation on the advantages of being a Yankee, making

a proposition of a combination baseball-football contract. It availed nothing. Trippi's lawyer was Charley Bidwill!

Bidwill, however, was not destined to see Trippi play as a Cardinal nor to see his prize rookie lead the team to a championship. He died suddenly of pneumonia, at the age of fifty-one, leaving control of the team to his widow, Violet, and his business associate, Ray Bennigsen.

The Cards and the Bears went into the final game of the 1947 season deadlocked for the divisional lead, and the Big Red whipped their old rivals, 30–21, in a furious game that actually was decided on the first play from scrimmage.

It was a play that had its inception in a scouting report brought in by Handler and "Buddy" Parker. Judging from the Bears' defensive pattern against the Lions, these two figured that, on a pass play, the Bear halfback and safety both would cover the fleet and elusive Kutner. So they decided to send Boris "Babe" Dimancheff downfield as the second possible receiver, figuring Mike Holovak, who was slower and less agile than Dimancheff, would cover him.

One flaw developed in their well-laid plans. Mrs. Dimancheff was in the hospital awaiting the arrival of an addition to the family and was in somewhat precarious health. "Babe" didn't show up for practice until Saturday, the day before the game, so never had an opportunity to run the play in practice.

"The first thing we had to do on Sunday," Conzelman explains, "was to win the toss. Luckily, we did. That gave us the chance to put the new play into use and try to catch the Bears by surprise."

The Bears kicked off over the goal line and the Cards took possession on their 20. Dimancheff, who in fourteen



Fred "Duke" Slater
Tackle



Stan Mauldin

HALL OF FAME CANDIDATES FROM THE CHICAGO CARDINALS



Charley Trippi
Back



Paul Christman
Back







Marshall Goldberg



Jimmy Conzelman Coach



John L. "Paddy" Driscoll
Back

HALL OF FAME CANDIDATES FROM THE CHICAGO CARDINALS



Marlin "Pat" Harder Back



Ernie Nevers Back



previous games had been Trippi's replacement at left half, lined up at right half for the first time in his football career. Trippi was at left, Christman at quarter, and Harder at full. Christman took the handoff from center and dropped back as Kutner and Dimancheff headed downfield. Dimancheff, as the Cards had planned, outsped Holovak, caught Christman's pass in mid-field while in full flight, and raced on to a touchdown. The Bears never fully recovered from this quick knockout.

The play-off game matched the Cards against the Eagles in icy Comiskey Park, and the "dream backfield" proved a nightmare to the Eagles' new eight-man line defense, breaking through for long touchdown gallops and a 28–21 victory. In the first period Trippi bolted through on a quick opener and went 44 yards to score. Angsman, on a similar play, went 70 yards in the second period, and in the third Trippi brought a punt back 75 yards to cross the goal line. In the final quarter Angsman repeated his 70-yard gallop.

The next year the Cardinals won eleven and lost one in the regular season, the lone defeat being at the hands of the Bears, but in the title game the Eagles exacted revenge by winning, 7–0, in the midst of a blizzard in Philadelphia.

Through these two years of glory the Cardinals had been plagued by tragedy. It began with the death of Bidwill, continued with the death of halfback Jeff Burkett in an airplane crash later in 1947, and reached a climax when Stan Mauldin dropped dead in the clubhouse following the opening game with the Eagles in 1948.

Mauldin's talent as a football player is best illustrated by an incident in the Eagles' training camp before the start of that season. Coach Neale showed the films of earlier Cardinal games over and over until Ernie Steele asked: "What is this, coach? Are the Cardinals the only team we play this year?"

"No," said Neale, "I just want you guys to watch a real tackle play football. Number seventy-seven on the Cards. His name is Mauldin. Look how that guy plays football!"

Mauldin's teammates suspected all was not well with him the night of that 1948 opener, for he asked to be re-

Mauldin's teammates suspected all was not well with him the night of that 1948 opener, for he asked to be relieved in the first period and again in the third, something he never had done before. But no one suspected tragedy was approaching, least of all Alex Wojciechowicz of the Eagles, who reached out a helping hand to Mauldin after one fourth-quarter play, saying: "Here, you look more tired than I feel."

After the game, a 21–14 Cardinal victory, Mauldin emerged from the shower bath and told Handler: "I feel pretty dizzy, coach." With those words he collapsed and died as his teammates knelt in prayer and tears.

Conzelman was brokenhearted over the succession of misfortunes which had beset his greatest teams and retired again at the end of the season. Handler and Parker succeeded him as co-coaches, but the combination didn't click and in 1950 "Curly" Lambeau was brought in. He, in turn, failed to produce to the satisfaction of Walter Wolfner, who had married Bidwill's widow and become the managing director of the Cardinals. Joe Kuharich, a former Cardinal guard, lasted a year as Lambeau's successor, then the job was turned over to "Jumbo Joe" Stydahar. The task of turning the Cardinals into a winner once again was a big one, but "Jumbo Joe" figured he had the size to swing it successfully.

ONLY IN PRO FOOTBALL, and not often even there, can you find a player of such consummate skill, poise, and intelligence that his coach can confidently entrust the direction of the team's attack or defense entirely to him. That's why fans couldn't believe their ears when "Buck" Shaw, the silver-haired coach of the San Francisco Forty-Niners, said of Frankie Albert:

"He's one of the best players I've ever seen, and certainly the best quarterback I've ever worked for."

When pressed, Shaw elaborated. "Yes, I said 'worked for.' In our system the quarterback is in charge on the field on Sunday afternoons, and it is up to the coaches to supply him with the players and materials that can make his strategy succeed. I love the job."

Albert was the first player Shaw signed in 1946 when he set about the task of creating a football team for San Francisco and Owner Anthony J. Morabito. He saw in the little left-hander the qualities of leadership he wanted in a quarterback, and Albert more than justified his judgment.

On the field Albert was boss of the Forty-Niners. He called his own plays, laid the groundwork of his own strategy, baited his own traps for unwary opponents, and then sprang them. Occasionally he would look to the bench for a suggestion or, while on the bench, he'd talk to an assistant coach on the press box phone about weaknesses in the enemy defense. But he ran both the show and the Shaw on Sundays.

Dud De Groot, who has a long record of coaching experience, both collegiate and professional, once said of Albert: "When he is quarterbacking, it is like having a coach on the field. And that's giving the benefit of the doubt to the coaches!"

During his early collegiate days at Stanford, Albert was a tailback and not too successful a one, but when Clark Shaughnessy took over as head coach and installed the T-formation, Albert quickly soared to stardom, leading his team into the Rose Bowl on New Year's Day of 1941. The Chicago Bears, because of their close affiliation with Shaughnessy, drafted Albert along with his backfield teammates, Norm Standlee and Hugh Gallarneau, but he never played for Chicago. Instead he went into the Navy, and when he was discharged, he elected to remain close to the scenes of his collegiate glory and signed with the Forty-Niners.

Albert was a southpaw in everything but his thinking. He passed with his left hand, he kicked with his left foot, but his thinking was strictly all right. Many times his strategy was a trifle unorthodox, but it was successful and you can't argue with success.

Once in the old All America Conference days, when the Forty-Niners were playing the Los Angeles Dons, he completed four consecutive passes to Alyn Beals, a fine end. Next he called a running play, then switched back to that same pass play to Beals three more times. The Dons, each time, figured he wouldn't dare throw that pass again. But he did, and they were never ready for it. Frankie was one of the earliest advocates of the boot-

Frankie was one of the earliest advocates of the bootleg play, and one of its most adroit practitioners. He would fake a handoff to a halfback going to the right, cradle the ball behind his hip, and take off to the left with such slick sleight-of-hand grace that the defenders would be completely fooled. They'd go for the decoy while he went for the yardage.

The Associated Press once snapped a prize photo showing Albert, with a sly grin on his face, running smack between two Los Angeles players, both of whom were ignoring him and had their eyes glued on the halfback to whom he had faked a handoff.

Albert was one of the few punters in the land who could kick a football while on the run. Occasionally, from punt formation, he would see the opposition relaxed and would run for good yardage, but if the defense pressed he could get his punt away while in motion. Only once did the maneuver backfire with disastrous results. That was in 1952, shortly before his retirement. The Forty-Niners had won ten straight games, five in exhibitions and five in league competition, and were playing the Bears, whom they had whipped soundly a few weeks earlier. Albert pulled this optional run-punt play on fourth down and just failed to make the needed yardage. The Bears took possession of the ball, scored, and started the Forty-Niners on a losing streak that knocked them out of championship contention just at a time when the

press was beginning to hail them as one of the great teams in National League history.

There was once, however, when Coach Shaw himself stopped an Albert run. That was in 1948. The San Francisco team, fired with pennant fever, invaded Buffalo only to fall victim to another upset. Bison fans had been "riding" the Forty-Niners unmercifully all day, and as the players headed for the dressing room after the game, one overly enthusiastic rooter became particularly abusive to Albert and Nick Susoeff, an end. In the tumult that followed, the fan went down, bleeding from the nose and mouth. Both Albert and Susoeff denied having struck a blow, but it was obvious that someone had belted the fan a good, solid punch. The fan swore out a complaint against Albert.

The Forty-Niners were staying at East Aurora, New York, just outside Buffalo, and working out there in preparation for a game in Cleveland the next Sunday. When Albert read about his imminent arrest, he hastened to his room and packed his suitcase. He was walking through the lobby, bag in hand, a few moments later when Shaw sighted him.

"Where are you going?" he cried.

"Well," said Albert, "we're not far from the Canadian border. I figure they can't touch me there. I can move along the border and come down to Cleveland just in time to play next Sunday."

"Put that suitcase down," Shaw ordered. "You stay right here."

The coach then launched his own investigation of the incident among the players, phoned the chief of police in Buffalo, and extended an official apology on behalf of the

team, the while being careful not to leave an impression he was blaming Albert or any other player. The Forty-Niners were merely sorry about the whole unfortunate occurrence.

The fan dropped his complaint and Albert picked up a new nickname—"Lamster."

Shaw's affection for smart quarterbacks was emphasized further after the 1950 season when the original Baltimore club folded. When the time came for the other clubs to share the Baltimore talent pool, Shaw grabbed Yelberton Abraham Tittle, who prefers to be known by his initials, simply as "Y.A." He not only was a good T quarterback, he could throw a long pass. Albert was better on the short ones.

For most of the 1951 season Tittle sat on the bench while Albert was the sole engineer at the throttle for the Forty-Niners on offense. Shaw was making sure Tittle was thoroughly schooled in his style of play before going into action because "on our team the quarterback is the boss on Sunday afternoons." This wait-and-see policy paid off in rich dividends, for when Shaw finally took the blanket off Tittle, that young man promptly fashioned two upset victories over the Detroit Lions, who had been entertaining championship notions up to that point. In the first game he tossed the winning pass to Joe Arenas. In the return match two weeks later Tittle faked a fourthperiod pass, and as the Lions dropped back to blanket the receivers, he tucked the ball under his arm and ran for the winning points.

Tittle bears a special grudge toward the Lions. It dates back to the game in 1950 when the Detroiters humiliated the Baltimore Colts, 45–21. Tittle remembers that game

as the worst of his career. Left most of the time without protection as he tried to pass, he spent much of the afternoon flat on his back with bulky Lions festooning his person.

During a game in 1952, with the Forty-Niners leading the Lions, 28-0, Shaw sent Tittle into the game.

"Stay on the ground," the coach advised. "Just let time run out."

But Tittle's first play was a pass. Then he threw another. And another. The Forty-Niners moved down the field toward another touchdown. Puzzled because his advice had been ignored, Shaw called Tittle to the side lines.

"What are you trying to do?" Shaw asked.
"I'm sorry, coach," Tittle replied. "I guess you'll just have to take me out. If you leave me in, I'm going to try to get fifty points. Those guys almost killed me in 1950 and I'm not going to let them off the hook now."

Shaw laughed heartily, and sent in Albert to finish the rest of the game.

In 1952 Shaw had two "field coaches." Albert would play the first and third periods, Tittle the second and fourth. Or, occasionally, they would reverse the procedure. In either event troubles descended heavily on the opponents. Until the mysterious collapse that struck the team after midseason, the Forty-Niners were as brilliant a team as pro football had seen in many years. Yet had it not been for that collapse, Frankie Albert might still be playing football.

"It's hard to figure when to step out," he said. "You don't want to go on playing until people remember you for what you once could do instead of what you are doing.

And you don't like to call it quits when you're behind. Still, a losing year is the only time to drop out. When you are winning, there are too many reasons to continue playing, even beyond the point of usefulness. If the Forty-Niners had won the championship in 1952, I would have been back in '53. And that might have been a mistake."

Albert's teammates on the early Forty-Niners were a sturdy bunch. They included the mighty Standlee, who joined them when released from service in '46; Len Eshmont, former Fordham flash; Johnny "Strike" Strzykalski, chunky halfback from Marquette; guards Visco Grgich and Bruno Banducci; and tackle John Woudenberg.

Standlee, in his lone campaign with the Bears in 1941, ran with such devastating power that Chicago fans hailed him with the highest praise possible. They called him "another Nagurski." He continued to roll over opponents like a runaway beer truck going downhill until 1949 when he switched to the more prosaic and demanding work of backing up the line. He was still doing a whale of a job at it when he was stricken with polio in 1952.

Strzykalski, who had played only freshman football in college, proved to be a highly effective runner. He also had a sense of humor and a deep appreciation for the linemen ahead of him. At a question-and-answer session following a luncheon one day a fan said to him: "I've watched you play many years, and I've always considered you as one of the best halfbacks in pro football. But I see now that you're not exceptionally big, and you say you are not exceptionally fast. To what, then, do you attribute your success?"

"Strike" grinned, then replied with obvious sincerity:
"To the holes in front of me."

It was during the 1948 season that the Forty-Niners were quartered in tiny, quiet Cambridge Springs, in the rolling hills of Pennsylvania, while playing a series of games in the East. For entertainment the boys had three choices—they could attend the one movie theater, play either of two pinball machines, or go down to watch the freight trains rumble through.

The team had stayed there at times during the two previous years, so all knew the town's limitations recreationwise. After three days on this trip they had exhausted every phase of amusement. The fourth night found the players milling restlessly about the lobby of the Riverside Inn. Suddenly John Woudenberg held up his hand and demanded attention.

"Say fellows," he said, "I know what we can do tonight. Let's walk around the block *counter-clockwise* for a change!"

These Forty-Niners were quick thinkers off the field as well as on it. They even mouse-trapped some professional gamblers.

Len Eshmont was reading a magazine in the lobby of a Cleveland hotel one afternoon when two men approached him. They engaged him in small talk and adroitly swung the conversation to the approaching game between the Forty-Niners and Browns. The questions became more and more probing and Eshmont became suspicious, so much so he framed his answers provocatively in order to draw the two men out.

"Honest," said one, "are you fellows in as poor physical condition as the papers say?"

"I'm telling you," said Eshmont, "we'll be lucky to field a complete backfield. Everybody is hurt. We might even wind up with a tackle playing fullback and a guard playing one of the halfbacks. That's what we've been working on this week anyhow."

"You feel, then, that the Forty-Niners haven't a chance?" asked the second man.

"Listen," said Eshmont, "if I knew where to place a bet, I'd bet everything I have on Cleveland. Do you know where a guy could make a little wager?"

The two men looked at each other, then one of them nodded and mumbled an address. As soon as they had departed, Eshmont went to the coaches with the story. The coaches relayed the tale to the Browns' office, which relayed it, in turn, to the police. On Monday the gambling joint was raided—after the Forty-Niners had upset the Browns, 34–20, on Sunday!

THE FORTY-NINERS PAN GOLD 29

By REASON OF THEIR geographic location, the San Francisco Forty-Niners often think of themselves in self-sympathy as gypsies during the football season. They travel approximately 20,000 miles a year for their "road" games, the shortest trip being a 400-mile haul to Los Angeles. Yet this nomad existence has brought them some rich experiences, and the intimacy engendered through close association while traveling has developed a tremendous team spirit.

They've had ball games postponed by hurricanes and floods, they've played in blizzards and blistering heat, they've been grounded by snow and fog. But they're flying higher and farther each year on a course they hope will lead to a championship.

In their first year—1946—they helped sandbag plateglass windows of their Miami hotel and clear away tumbled trees and other debris from the streets after a hurricane struck Florida. Twenty-four hours later they played a postponed game in the Orange Bowl, then clambered

aboard their chartered plane for Los Angeles. Tossed by heavy winds on a rough flight, they were aloft nineteen hours before reaching the Coast; and since they had left right after the game, more than twenty-four hours had elapsed since they had shaved or changed clothes.

They were hardly a prepossessing group as they straggled into the lobby of their hotel in Pasadena—a quiet haven catering largely to the elderly. It took keen diplomacy and a bit of impassioned oratory by Coach "Buck" Shaw to convince the clerk he wasn't dealing with a band of gangdom gorillas.

Since that time there has been a club rule requiring all players to wear coats and ties in public and, if necessary, to shave before disembarking in any city they visit. It has been violated only once—with official sanction. That was because of another flight in which the weather was even more foul. For hours the chartered plane circled the New York airport in blinding fog. The pilot admitted later he never had a more harrowing experience than when another plane swished across his nose, so close he could almost identify the crew in the other cockpit. A split second's difference and there would have been no history of the Forty-Niners.

There is a history, however, short but colorful, and it has its foundation in the unswerving belief of Anthony J. "Tony" Morabito that San Francisco would support professional football. He first tried to obtain a franchise in the National League in 1941, but was turned down on the grounds that the minor-league Clippers, then in operation, held territorial rights. Consequently, when the All America Conference was born, Morabito was one of its most enthusiastic pioneers.

People said he was committing financial suicide, for he was competing with five major colleges within a radius of thirty-five miles of San Francisco. They were the University of California, Stanford, St. Mary's, Santa Clara, and the University of San Francisco. The colleges held the choice Sunday dates at Kezar Stadium, which was to be the home of the Forty-Niners.

In their first two years of existence the Forty-Niners lost approximately a quarter of a million dollars, but Morabito wasn't discouraged. Quite the contrary. Instead, he bought out his two original partners, and his younger brother Vic moved in as a heavy stockholder. Since then the Forty-Niners have become a profitable enterprise, holding the choice dates at Kezar and frequently filling that vast stadium.

As his first step in building a team, "Tony" Morabito hired Shaw as his coach. That was in 1944, two years before the first Forty-Niners took the field. (The team's name was suggested jointly by Mrs. Shaw and Mrs. Morabito.) Shaw at the time was doubly a coach without a team, for he was at Santa Clara, which had dropped football for the war period. Morabito promptly loaned him to California, where he did a fine coaching job, meanwhile rounding up players for the Forty-Niners.

rounding up players for the Forty-Niners.

In their first year the Forty-Niners won nine and lost five, and for their five years in the All America Conference had a record of thirty-eight victories, fourteen defeats, and two ties. Their best friends and worst enemies were the Cleveland Browns. Their rivalry was so keen it packed 'em in at the box office, but the Forty-Niners seemed cast always in the role of bridesmaid to the fantastically successful Browns. The two were far and

away the strongest teams in the conference, but unhappily were in the same division of the league and so never met for the title until the last season of the A.A.C.'s life, after the divisional setup had been abandoned.

The championship game was played several days after the A.A.C. had been absorbed by the National League, so the players actually were fighting for an empty honor. What's more, the day was bitterly cold and only 22,550 fans showed up in Cleveland's huge stadium. The Forty-Niners had beaten the Browns, 56–28, earlier and had set ground-gaining and scoring records for the A.A.C.; but they were beset by injuries for the title battle and once again caught the bride's bouquet. The Browns won, 21–7.

During the course of this 1949 season, on a train ride, little 152-pound Joe Vetrano, the point-kicking specialist, and giant Bruno Banducci, 220-pound All-Conference guard, were struggling playfully for possession of a popular magazine. Suddenly Banducci crumpled to the floor in pain, and even before trainer Bob Kleckner could examine the injury, everyone was sure Banducci's shoulder, which had been hurt earlier, had been damaged again. Kleckner confirmed it. The big guard had a shoulder separation.

Coach Shaw shuffled sadly to his seat and there was a sudden, strained silence. Nobody looked at little Vetrano, but heavy in the air was an unspoken blame.

Vetrano bounced up from his seat and walked over to stand beside Shaw. In a loud, clear voice, he said: "Don't worry, coach. You've just found yourself a new all-time, All-Pro guard. If that's all these big guys up front can take, then a little backfield guy like myself should be hell on wheels."

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Even Banducci laughed through his pain. "Take him up on it, coach," he said. "And the next time we scrimmage I want to be playing on the opposite side of the line from him."

Vetrano is the only veteran player Shaw ever "fired." He sorrowfully gave the little man his release in 1950 because he "couldn't afford to carry a specialist," but the public outcry was so violent that Shaw vowed, "I'll never do that again."

San Francisco's debut in the National League in 1950 was anything but a happy and auspicious one. The Forty-Niners' first foe was the Washington Redskins, and Morabito made a pre-game talk in the dressing room. "We've traveled a hard road getting to this point," he told his players, "so let's make up for it. Don't stop until you've scored one hundred points, then take a deep breath and score a hundred more."

Washington beat them soundly, 31–12. The Philadelphia Eagles beat them the next week, 28–10, and a lot of other teams beat them, too. The Forty-Niners wound up with a record of three victories and nine defeats. This about-face in fortune on the gridiron was reflected in the box office, the "gate" falling off sharply. Morabito issued orders to Shaw to rebuild the team in a hurry.

The nucleus of a powerhouse was still there—Albert, Strzykalski, Beals, Banducci, Standlee, Grgich, along with fellows like center Bill Johnson, tackles Leo Nomellini and Ray Collins, linebacker Hardy Brown—sometimes called the roughest man in football—halfbacks Lowell Wagner and Verl Lillywhite, and Joe "Jet" Perry, burly Negro fullback who combined tremendous drive with a rare burst of speed. Shaw, however, wanted more and

bigger tackles and additional halfback speed. And it didn't take him long to find what he wanted.

At the halves he acquired Joe Arenas and California's Pete Schabarum and Jim Monachino. In the line he added huge Al Carapella. He grabbed Tittle. He also embraced a new brand of football. The Forty-Niners forsook their old power game for speed and finesse. The team went definitely point-happy, especially late in the 1951 season when it toppled the mighty Lions twice to close the season with seven victories, four defeats, and a tie.

"I wonder," Shaw said in discussing the about-face in the Forty-Niners' style of play, "if the players who were with us in 1946—Eshmont and the others who typified power football—could even make our ball club now? We have an entirely different concept. We want speed and quick starts and deep receivers and long gainers. We want a backfield composed of four players, any one of whom can go ninety-nine yards on a single play."

He got one halfback who not only could go that far but frequently came close to doing so in 1952. The lad's name is Hugh McElhenny and he came out of Washington with an All-American reputation, but nothing he ever accomplished as a collegian could match his feats as a freshman professional. He carried the ball ninety-eight times for 684 yards to rank fourth among the league's top ground-gainers. His average of 7 yards per carry was far and away the best.

His longest scoring run from scrimmage was an 89-yard jaunt against Dallas, but perhaps his most jolting run was a 95-yard punt return for a touchdown against the Bears. Ever since the Forty-Niners had entered the N.F.L., Coach Shaw had been telling them: "You won't

really be members of this league until you beat the Bears." According to this reasoning, the Forty-Niners still weren't bona fide National Leaguers when they invaded Chicago's Wrigley Field in October of 1952. Then McElhenny took charge.

That afternoon, as the Forty-Niners came of age in Shaw's book with a thumping 40–16 victory, "Hurrying Hugh" hustled for 259 yards in eighteen trips with the football. And for good measure he broke open the game with that long touchdown punt return. It only embarrassed the red-faced Bears more when McElhenny said, after the game, "I thought I was on about the twenty-yard line when I caught that punt. If I'd realized I was on the five, I'd have let the ball go into the end zone!"

Helping to ignite the San Francisco spark was Bob Toneff, an All-American tackle from Notre Dame, and a brilliant end named Gordon Soltau. Toneff is one of the few stellar collegians who enhanced his luster as a pro. Soltau is one of the many players who, after a comparatively undistinguished career on college gridirons, soar to stardom as professionals.

Soltau was a good end at Minnesota, but his abilities didn't stagger pro scouts with their impact. Green Bay drafted him for the 1950 season but traded him to Cleveland after one exhibition game. The Browns weren't too impressed, either, and not long thereafter Coach Paul Brown called him to one side, told him the Forty-Niners were desperate for a fellow who could place-kick, and asked if he'd like to play in San Francisco. He agreed, but it wasn't until a year later that the Forty-Niners began to realize what a tremendous bargain they had made.

In both 1951 and 1952 Soltau was the Forty-Niners'



Bruno Banducci Guard



Leo Nomellini Tackle

HALL OF
FAME
CANDIDATES FROM
THE SAN FRANCISCO
FORTY-NINERS



Joe Perry Back



Norm Standlee
Back



Frankie Albert
Back



Hardy Brown Back



Hugh McElhenny Back

HALL OF **FAME** CANDIDATES FROM THE SAN FRANCISCO FORTY-NINERS



Lawrence "Buck" Shaw Coach



leading scorer and in '52 he led the league with 7 touchdowns, S4 points after touchdown, and 6 field goals good for 94 points. He caught 54 passes for 759 yards and he was placed at an offensive end position on most All-League selections.

Soltau is typical of the ambitious young men who use pro football as a steppingstone to success in business, politics, and the professions. He is one of California's most active young politicians and is sales manager for a steel company, bossing a considerable sales staff. He is also a skier of noteworthy skill, winning the California Class B event at Donner Summit in 1952. And just to show how uncertain sports can be—after surviving a season of football and skiing without mishap, he attended a company picnic and suffered a severe gash on his head when he struck the bottom of the pool in executing a fancy dive!

Just what happened to this Forty-Niner team, which stopped as unpredictably as an old flivver after running over all early-season opposition, is one of football's great unexplained mysteries. Leo Nomellini insists the team sagged because of tiredness and the long schedule, yet the schedule was just as long for the other teams. Halfback Jim Cason says it was because of the many injuries the Forty-Niners suffered, yet the "cripples" were returning late in the year when the team was losing.

Coach Shaw merely shakes his head. "I just don't know," he admits. "It's a mental drop somewhere, of that we're sure. I've learned again that no coach ever can fully understand the mental motivations and attitudes of any athletic team."

Inexplicable as the collapse of the 1952 team was,

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some San Francisco fans thought they could discern an omen in a touching ceremony that preceded the final game of the season. Dave Scofield, the field announcer, in introducing the players in the starting line-up, waited until the very end before calling out the names of Frankie Albert and John Strzykalski. Then Frankie and Johnny, the city's football sweethearts through its first seven years in the pro game, trotted out on the field together as the band played "Should Auld Acquaintance be Forgot."

That, San Franciscans like to think, marked the end of an era and the dawn of a new one. The first seven years were ones of famine insofar as championships were concerned. Fans couldn't help hoping the next seven, true to the old Biblical story, would be years of feasting.

LITTLE ARTHUR ROONEY

ACCORDING TO THE RECORDS, professional football made its formal Pittsburgh debut in the early autumn of the year 1933, but to Arthur J. Rooney, the fabulous and fascinating Irishman responsible for its beginning, the game didn't have its baptism until the first Sunday after the first Tuesday in November of that same year. That is the day Rooney, owner and president of the Pittsburgh Steelers throughout their history, remembers best of all. And if it hadn't been for a misplaced superintendent of police, the steel metropolis of the world might be without a professional football franchise today.

Art Rooney, a smallish, stockily built fellow with craggy eyebrows and a dented nose, is a restless chap with a great passion for betting on horses. He was awarded the team because (a) he was a long-time friend of Joe Carr, president of the N.F.L., and (b) at the time he had the \$2,500 needed to purchase the franchise.

Art also wanted to purchase the Pittsburgh baseball club but shied away from making an offer because he

knew that Judge K. M. Landis, baseball's high commissioner, frowned on people allied with the racing industry. This undoubtedly was a sad blow to the fortunes of the Pirates, for over the years the happy-go-lucky Rooney has successfully promoted his football team, a leading racing stable, championship boxing matches, and sundry business ventures not allied with sports.

But on the first Sunday following the first Tuesday in November of 1933, it looked like his professional football beginning might turn into a promotional dud.

Carr gave the city of Pittsburgh, always rated one of football's strongholds, a franchise on the premise that the ancient blue laws, which forbade Sunday sports, would be abolished. An amendment calling for repeal of the law was passed by the people on the first Tuesday in November and, according to plan, was to be ratified immediately by the city council. Quick ratification was essential because, on the following Sunday, the new Pittsburgh football team was scheduled to play the Giants at Forbes Field. However, between Tuesday and Sunday the council members forgot to act on the amendment.

Rooney, still unfamiliar with that part of the body politic, paid little attention to the legislators, concentrating on the task of ballyhooing his promotional venture. The die-hard, blue-law brethren were busy, too, but unwisely waited until the day of the game to raise a point of law in an effort to stop the first Sunday game.

Steve Owen and his Giants already were going through a pre-game workout on the field when members of a

Steve Owen and his Giants already were going through a pre-game workout on the field when members of a strong ministerial association were seeking out the Director of Public Safety to persuade him to enforce the law and stop the game. This official, it turned out, was not

available, so the ministerial group petitioned the aid of Franklin McQuade, superintendent of police. He, too, was among the missing. Before he was found, the game—the first official Sunday game in Pittsburgh history—was played and the home forces had lost.

Later the mystery of the missing superintendent was solved. He was attending the football game!

The following Tuesday the city council formally ratified the amendment. In the years since then Rooney's \$2,500 investment has turned into one of the most valuable in football.

Rooney has kept a little diary in which he pens comments on all games played by his team. The entry on the date of this first game is succinct—and typically Rooney. It reads: "The Giants won. Our team looked terrible. The fans did not get their money's worth."

The story of Art Rooney cannot be told properly without including the entire Rooney family, especially his brother Dan, a great athlete in his own right and currently the Rev. Silas Rooney, O.F.M., athletic director at St. Bonaventure University.

Art, the oldest of a family of six boys and two girls, was born in Coulterville, a little mining community on the outskirts of Pittsburgh. The men on his father's side of the family were steel puddlers, his mother's relatives worked in the soft-coal mines. Art, who stoutly maintains that he and hard work "are not very friendly," is exceedingly proud of his laboring relatives, especially of an uncle who fought for unionism long before it became fashionable and long before the terrible Homestead Strike in which members of the Rooney family were involved.

His father, Dan, had little liking either for the mines

or the steel mills. He became Coulterville's only innkeeper until he moved to Pittsburgh and opened the well-remembered Rooney Saloon, a short distance from old Exposition Park, where the Pirates played before they moved to Forbes Field.

The saloon became famous for nickel beers, free lunches, sports celebrities, and Galway Irish. On Saturday night, if a man couldn't speak Gaelic, he was out of the conversation. Recently the old gentleman recalled: "It was a good saloon no ladies were allowed."

Art Rooney was particularly fascinated by baseball and football with the result that he applied himself more diligently on the playgrounds than he did in the classrooms. "No one," an old associate recalls, "wanted to be a great athlete more than Art. Often you would see him heading for the playground at daybreak and not returning until dusk. He was a tireless fellow who practiced so hard and exhausted so many playmates, he continually had to find new ones."

All this practice was not in vain. He became such a fine football player that Knute Rockne wrote at least a half-dozen letters trying to persuade him to enroll at Notre Dame. He was so good in baseball that he was signed by two major-league teams—the Chicago Cubs and Boston Red Sox. Impartial boxing critics claim he would have become a world's champion had he accepted an offer to turn professional. As it was, he won the international amateur lightweight and welterweight championships and defeated Sammy Mossberg, who, at the time, was the Olympic welterweight titleholder.

But to Rooney, a man of deep humility and great devotion, the "greatest all-round athlete" was his brother

Dan, who might have become heavyweight champion or one of the greatest catchers in New York Yankee history. Instead, he entered a Franciscan seminary and found a much more exciting career as a missionary in China.

He was in the Orient when brother Art reportedly "broke the book" at the Saratoga race track and sent a goodly share of his winnings to Father Dan, who built a little church and bought food and medical supplies for his Chinese friends and neighbors.

Art is reticent about his big day at the races, but legend has it that Rooney went to New York with \$300 and a light heavyweight fighter named "Buck" Crouse. On the closing Saturday at Empire City, Rooney ran his \$300 into \$21,000 and decided to head for home with his winnings. On the way to the depot he stopped in Joe Madden's restaurant and saloon. Within a few hours he and Madden and Crouse were on their way to Saratoga.

On Monday the turf scene shifted to this famous spa and Rooney bet \$2,000 at odds of 8–1 on a horse named Quel Jeu. It won in a photo finish. Four more times, so the story goes, Rooney won in nip-and-tuck finishes, making his greatest killing with a \$10,000 bet on another 8–1 shot. He tried to place \$15,000 on the nag but the bookies wouldn't risk that much. In all, his profit that historic day was \$256,000.

Both Art and Dan finished their athletic careers as members of the Wheeling club of the Middle Atlantic baseball league. Art was outfielder and manager, Dan the catcher, and both established records that stood until the league disbanded recently. Old-time fans recall that "nearly every game the Rooney boys played in ended in a 'Hey, Rube!'"

Art received his formal education at Duquesne, Indiana State Normal, and Georgetown in that order.

"I had signed a contract with the Boston Red Sox," he was telling a couple of friends in the football office recently, "but instead of reporting to spring training I decided to go back to school, this time to Georgetown. The Hoyas had a great team.

"And what do you think happened? I reported to John O'Reilly, who was Georgetown's coach, but I failed. Me—a big leaguer—failed to make the team!"

Later he was drafted by the Cubs but developed a sore arm and was shipped to Mobile. He never reported. Instead, he returned to Pittsburgh and began to organize and coach great semipro football teams.

"They may have called our teams semipros," Art recalls, "but they were comparable to some of the teams in the National Football League when we first joined. We had some great names on our rosters—boys from Pitt, Carnegie Tech, Duquesne, Washington and Jefferson, and Geneva. And these schools had some of the best teams in the country then."

Art was player-coach of the Majestic Radios, the Hope Harveys, and the James P. Rooneys. Rooney is extremely proud of his coaching record. "It's better than George Marshall's!" he quips.

Art at one time ran for political office. He was a candidate for registrar of wills and one of his campaign speeches made history:

"I don't know what the job is," he said. "I don't know where the office is. But if I'm elected I'll guarantee you will get a square shake, because I'll get good people to run it."

Rooney has operated his football team on the same premise. He gets good people to run the team and he, in turn, gets a huge kick out of being its number one fan. He understands perhaps better than anyone the uncertainties of football as a business, with the result he operates his Steelers on a sound financial basis. In the days of inflated salaries he refused to join the trend. He told each player what he could pay. If the player wasn't satisfied, he was traded. But most were satisfied.

Branch Rickey, who was brilliantly successful as a baseball executive and a complete flop as a pro football impresario, was attending a luncheon shortly after assuming control of the Brooklyn football team. There he met Rooney. "Mr. Rickey," said Art, "I've always regarded you with the deepest admiration and respect. But when I found you had gone into pro football, I had my doubts about you!"

The Steeler office, where Rooney presides, is a gathering place for the colorful folk of the sports world. For years the club had its headquarters on the ground floor of the Fort Pitt Hotel, and its windows opened onto the street. Many are the Pittsburghers who have been startled to see a window fly open and some hulking athlete vault out onto the sidewalk rather than stroll through the hotel lobby and exit via the normal method.

After the office was moved to an upper floor of a Pittsburgh office building, many of the "regulars," including "Pie" Traynor, the old Pirate baseball star, stopped dropping in for the daily bull session. Pressed for a reason, Traynor replied:

"I'm afraid that some day somebody is going to forget the office is moved and step out the window"

THE STEELERS' IRON MEN

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No football coach ever had a more astonishing debut than did Johnny Blood, who took over as boss of the Steelers in 1937, near the end of his long and fantastic career. On the first play of his first game as playing boss of the Pittsburgh team he caught the kickoff on his goal line and deposited the ball in the opposite end zone after a dazzling run of 100 yards.

"Follow the example of the boss, boys," he chirped. Unfortunately, none were able to do so. Indeed, the Pittsburgh football story has been one of almost continual frustration under no less than a dozen coaches. And of these coaches two stand out, for vastly different reasons, in the memory of the club's owner, Art Rooney.

One is Blood, a fun-loving fellow who divided his time between playing the part of a gay boulevardier and attempting to solve an economic treatise entitled "Spend Yourself Rich." The other was the late Dr. John Bain "Jock" Sutherland, a taciturn Scot who ruled with a mailed fist and the discipline of a Prussian officer.

Rooney can draw quite an analogy as he thinks back on the days of Blood and Sutherland. As to comparative coaching ability there can be no argument. Sutherland must rank among the all-time greats in his profession. Blood, in comparison, got into coaching on a pass, or a series of passes and runs that made his movie-marquee name famous. Both left indelible marks on Pittsburgh's football fans.

Sutherland's discipline was rigid and inflexible, so much so, in fact, that Bill Dudley, probably the greatest player in Pittsburgh's pro history, revolted and forced the doctor to trade him in 1947. Once during the height of the season the players staged a minor insurrection which was quelled only after the doctor met the rebellious players more than halfway.

Blood went to the other extreme. "On every team," Rooney points out, "it is customary for the coach to worry about the players. But when Blood was around, the players worried about the coach, wondering whether he was going to show up."

At the start of every practice day Blood would give each player a slogan, not unlike an Army password, to commit to memory. The slogans went like this: "Bear meat is good to eat" or "Packers are easy to defeat" or "Steelers can't be beat." Sometimes he would join in the practice, sometimes he would not, depending upon how he felt. And there was many a morning when he felt like a man without a country.

One of Blood's Pittsburgh teams scored a notable "first," but actually neither the coach nor the team could take full credit. In 1939, in an exhibition game staged at Erie, Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh edged the Chicago Bears,

10-9. It was the first time a Pittsburgh team ever had beaten the Bears.

Both teams were quartered in the same hotel in Erie. A few hours before game time Rooney was ambling down a corridor toward his room with his eldest son, Danny, then seven. As they passed a doorway, Rooney heard the voice of George Halas, who was giving the Bears a stern pre-game lecture. Art stopped, listened, and leaned over to whisper something to his son. Danny nodded, marched to the door, and knocked loudly while his father ducked around a corner.

"Who's there?" Halas demanded, then added: "Come

in." Danny timidly opened the door.
"Well, well," said Halas, "what do you want, young

man? You must have the wrong room."

"My name," the lad replied haltingly, "is Danny Rooney. And my old man sent me in here to ask you to take it easy on his team tonight."

The Bear players roared. Even Halas could not suppress a wide grin. He realized any further serious talk about football would be in vain. He dismissed the squad. To this day Halas insists: "Rooney's kid was the main offense against the Bears that night. "

Actually, however, pro football didn't jell in Pittsburgh until 1946 when Sutherland assumed the headcoaching duties. The dour doctor, more an institution than a personality in the steel city, gave the pro sport a touch of "class," and as one long-time ticket holder put it, "some damn fine football teams."

"Jock," a graduate of Pitt and for many years its coach, developed the Panthers into some of the finest collegiate teams in the land. Several of his teams were acknowledged national champions, three competed in the Rose Bowl. But in 1939 he quit as the result of internal problems brewing on the campus.

He could have had the job as coach of the Pittsburgh pro team shortly after he left the Pitt campus but shied away because he was told that the pro league was "beneath his dignity." Nevertheless he later turned to the pros at Brooklyn, but it wasn't until 1946 that he met with Rooney in a private room on the second floor of the Pittsburgh Athletic Association and signed as coach of the Steelers. Of this brief association he said: "My years with Art Rooney and the Steelers were among the happiest of my life."

Sutherland served only two years with the Steelers before his untimely death in the spring of 1948. His record of thirteen victories, nine defeats, and a tie is not particularly impressive, but in his second season it took a play-off game with a great team of Philadelphia Eagles to deprive him of the Eastern divisional championship. That, incidentally, is the closest Pittsburgh ever has come to winning a title.

"Jock's" name also was box-office magic in Pittsburgh. Not once in his two seasons at the helm did the Steelers open a ticket window on the day of a game. The park was sold out and the management pleaded with fans to stay home if they didn't already have tickets. One year the sale of season tickets reached 23,000—just short of capacity.

"If it hadn't been for Dr. Sutherland," Rooney insists, "I never would have been able to continue in pro football. The doctor came along at just the right time. He gave Pittsburgh fans the kind of teams they had been looking

for, and he came at a time when the All America had begun its costly war. If it hadn't been for him, someone other than Art Rooney would own the Steelers today. I never could have sustained the losses and remained in operation."

Through the long, arduous years Pittsburgh has been represented by some truly fine football players even though the team has never won a championship. They include men like Warren Heller, Jess Quatse, Armand Niccolai, Dick Riffle, Andy Tomasic, Curt Sandig, Byron "Whizzer" White, Bill Dudley, Steve Lach, Lynn Chandnois, Elbie Nickel, and Jimmy Finks.

Of these White stands out because he was the first player in the N.F.L. to be paid a flat five-figure salary. In 1938, when he came out of Colorado, he was paid \$15,000 and led the league in ground-gaining.

\$15,000 and led the league in ground-gaining.

"No player," says Rooney, "ever put out as much effort as White. I've seen many players with greater ability but none who tried harder and gave 100 per cent effort at all times."

White, a Rhodes scholar, later was a law clerk for Carl Vinson, Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, and has been mentioned as a candidate for the governorship of Colorado.

The greatest player in Steeler history, however, was Dudley. "Bullet Bill" was pint-sized but packed the wallop of a magnum. He was the team's best runner, its best punter, and top defensive man, rating among the best safety men of all time. In addition he kicked off and booted all field goals and points after touchdown. In his first year he was the league's leading ground gainer and in 1946, at the end of the war, he led again in ground-

gaining, topped the field in pass interceptions, and won the most-valuable-player trophy.

It was after this season that Wes Fesler, whose teams have won many intercollegiate championships, said of Dudley: "He is the most unorthodox, yet the best player I've seen in many a year. He hasn't great speed, but still I've never seen him caught from behind. He gets into position incorrectly, but his start is phenomenal. As far as form is concerned when it comes to punting, he has none, yet he averages over forty-five yards. He's a great faker. He's a great defensive man and one of the deadliest tacklers I've ever watched. He is truly an All American in any league."

"Greasy" Neale, coach of the Eagles, gave a standing order to his quarterbacks that no pass was to be thrown in Dudley's defensive zone. He says no other defensive back ever forced him to issue such an order.

Dudley was Rooney's favorite as well as the fans'. An assistant Steeler coach once said after a game, "Dudley was good, but he didn't hit the right holes."

"That's lucky for us," Rooney replied. "If he ever starts hitting the right holes, the other team will never be able to stop us. We'd score so easily the games would get boring and the fans probably would quit coming out to see us."

Another great Steeler, whose career encompassed both the White and the Dudley eras, was Chuck Cherundolo, who was an All-American center at Penn State and a tremendous performer through ten seasons as a pro. It was his misfortune to play at a time when Mel Hein and "Bulldog" Turner, more colorful athletes, were claiming the limited headlines reserved for centers, but he was about as good as they come. He possessed outstanding

qualities of leadership and was the Steelers' complete boss on the field.

The first coach in Pittsburgh's pro history was Forest "Jap" Douds of Washington and Jefferson, who was replaced the next season by Luby Di Meolo, an intimate friend and former teammate of Jim Rooney. He, too, lasted one season.

Di Meolo was followed by Joe Bach, who set a record by lasting two seasons and came within one game of winning the title in 1936. Bach returned in 1952 for a second term at the helm. Bach's first regime was followed by three seasons of Blood and one with Walt Kiesling, veteran tackle who had a long playing career with Duluth, Pottsville, Green Bay, the Cardinals, and the Bears.

During the war Bert Bell, who was Rooney's partner at the time, took over as coach. He still blames Rooney for wrecking the season of 1941, in which the team won one, lost nine, and tied one. Bell took his team to training camp at Hershey, Pennsylvania, and one day Rooney, en route to Saratoga with his racing stable, stopped in to see how things were progressing. He sat in the stands and watched the team play an intrasquad game. The players were dressed in bright new uniforms. The scrimmage went badly.

After the game one of the sports writers turned to Rooney and asked what he thought of the team. Art's reply made headlines.

"The same old team," he said truthfully. "The only difference is the uniforms."

Rooney's estimate proved 100 per cent correct, and before the season of 1942 progressed far, Bell resigned as coach and Aldo "Buff" Donelli took over. "Buff" spent



Bill Dudley
Back



HALL OF
FAME
CANDIDATES FROM
THE PITTSBURGH STEELERS

Byron "Whizzer" White Back



Johnny Blood Back and Coach



Elbie Nickel End



Chuck Cherundolo Center



Arthur J. Rooney
Owner



Joe F. Carr President



Bert Bell Commissioner

HALL OF FAME CANDIDATES AT LARGE



Andy Lotshaw Trainer



Norman "Bobie" Cahn Referee



Elmer Layden Commissioner



Ted Collins
Owner of Yanks and Bulldogs

part of his time coaching Duquesne and the rest with the pros until Commissioner Elmer Layden ordered him to quit his dual role and devote full time to one job or the other. Donelli elected to remain at Duquesne, so Kiesling took over again.

In 1943 the team merged with the Philadelphia Eagles and was known as Pitt Steagles with "Greasy" Neale as coach. Later the Steelers were merged with the Cardinals as a wartime measure and called the Card-Pitts. Kiesling and Phil Handler were co-coaches.

This combine didn't win a single game but every Monday morning Handler would receive some fan mail—one post card. Each time he would rip the card into small bits, muttering to himself. One day Rooney asked him about it.

"Some high-school coach," said Handler in all seriousness, "keeps pestering me. He wants me to give him my offense."

"I don't know who was crazy," Rooney laughs, "the high-school coach or Handler. That was an offense that still has to win a game in the National League!"

After Dr. Sutherland's short and successful career the job went, in 1948, to one of his prize pupils and assistants, John Michelosen, who held on for four years, producing teams that were consistently tough and rugged, but as consistently unspectacular and only moderately successful. Pressure from the fans, who had grown weary of the single-wing offense used by Michelosen, finally forced Rooney to make another coaching change, so he brought back Bach, who installed the T-formation.

It began to click in rather spectacular fashion at times in 1952 and all because of a castoff named Jimmy Finks,

THE STORY OF PRO FOOTBALL

who smashed ten Steeler records in his first year at quarterback. Finks started his pro career with the New York Yanks in the A.A.C., but was released. He came to the Steeler camp in 1949 and caught on as a defensive back, a position he held for three years until Bach installed the T. Then he moved to quarterback with amazing results.

He tied the great Otto Graham with twenty touch-down passes for the 1952 season and engineered one of the most amazing upsets in pro history—a 63–7 Steeler triumph over the New York Giants, supposedly the best defensive team of all.

The opinion is growing in Pittsburgh that Art Rooney soon will have a winner, and not one stabled in his racing barn.

ORPHANS OF THE GRID STORM 32

BERT BELL, THE ASTUTE commissioner of pro football, once revealed the rather astounding fact that of the forty-three franchises granted over the years, only a handful have made money. The rest-thirty or more-have lost, some in a minor way, some heavily. But by all odds the champion loser is Ted Collins, talented radio and television tycoon who as partner of Kate Smith reaped a fortune from the air lanes, but who found line bucks worth much less than one hundred cents on the dollar.

Collins estimates he lost more than a million dollars in less than a decade of association with the game of professional football.

Ted, a dapper little Irishman, played professional basketball years ago, and the cage sport was his first venture into professional sports promotion. He purchased the original Celtics, one of the greatest quintets in basketball history, and operated them for six years. He shifted to pro football in 1941 when he purchased the Long Island Indians of the American League, and two years later he demonstrated his courage by buying the Boston franchise of the National Football League, despite the fact that in the previous two decades three promoters had lost some \$250,000 trying to get the sport established in Boston.

He fielded his first team there in the midst of the war when football talent was scarce and football dollars even more so. In December of 1948 he, too, moved out, expressing no bitterness although the city had failed once again to support a team.

"Our experience in Boston," he said, "has not proved it a poor sports city. Last year, for instance, we won five games, but only one of them at home. We haven't given the fans there much to cheer about. But when one loses about a quarter of a million dollars there, as I have, it's about time to move out."

He had weathered a stormy time in Boston, one of his greatest blows being delivered by the courts which ruled that Angelo Bertelli, former Notre Dame quarterback who was to direct his T-formation, properly belonged to the Los Angeles Dons of the All America Conference. Bertelli had signed contracts with both teams.

In 1949 Collins moved his team to New York to help combat the All America challenge, but with Dan Topping's Yankees already holding Yankee Stadium as its home field, Collins' Yanks from Boston found themselves without a home and a name. Eventually they moved into the Polo Grounds on the days the Giants were on the road and called themselves the Bulldogs. The Bulldogs' bite, of course, was on Collins.

With the coming of football peace in 1950 the Bulldogs became the Yanks once again and moved into the Stadium. Led by the passing of George Ratterman, the brilliant end play of Dan Edwards, the running of "Buddy" Young, Zollie Toth, George Taliaferro, and Sherman Howard, plus some inspired line play by Joe Signaigo, an All-League guard, the Yanks started like a whirlwind, winning six of their first seven games. But they faltered over the twin bugaboos of injuries and a weak defense, winding up with a record of seven victories and five defeats—and a deficit.

Collins' woes multiplied the next year. To begin with, the world series, which involved the baseball Yankees, deprived him of two attractive early-season home dates. Then the weather took a hand.

"If New York ever wants some water," Collins protested, "just schedule us there twice a week. They'll have a flood."

So it was that Collins asked for six home dates in the Stadium after the end of the world series in 1952. And when he couldn't get them, he called it quits, returning the franchise and its assets to the league for \$100,000.

The franchise, and the ball club, promptly were purchased for \$300,000 by a syndicate of Dallas oil barons and businessmen headed by Giles Miller, a youthful textile tycoon. Texas, a hotbed of high-school and collegiate football, was deemed "ripe" for the pros, who had drawn tremendous throngs in exhibition play in Dallas. The enthusiastic promoters leased the Cotton Bowl for their home games, but they grossly overestimated the enthusiasm of the Texas fans for a team that was woefully short of major-league stature. With five games still remaining on the schedule Miller and his associates turned the franchise back to the league, announcing the club had lost \$250,000 during its short term of operation.

THE STORY OF PRO FOOTBALL

The Texans, as they were known during their brief sojourn in Dallas, finished the season under the banner of the league, beating the Bears for their only triumph. Then several cities sought them for '53, with Baltimore leading the parade.

Baltimore's first venture into pro football had ended unhappily in January, 1951. It had its beginnings in 1947 when the Miami franchise in the All America Conference was transferred to the Maryland metropolis. The team, known as the Colts, played to 199,661 at home that season and attendance increased the next year, but in 1949 the club encountered heavy financial weather. Nevertheless, Baltimore was one of the three A.A.C. teams awarded franchises in the N.F.L. when the leagues merged for the 1950 season. The Colts didn't have the kick of a popgun, however, and gave up the ghost early in '51 when Abe Watner, the club president, announced he had dropped \$106,000 on the season.

There is something irresistible, however, about pro football to those who love it, and so when Dallas gave up its ill-starred venture, Baltimore was the first city to clamor for admittance. Bert Bell listened to the plea of the proposed new owners and indicated he'd grant their wishes if they could sell 15,000 season tickets in advance.

They could and they did.

Pro football's orphans had found a home once again.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the compilation of the background, the details, and the anecdotes that make up this brief history of the National Football League we are indebted to all who have played professional football or had a hand in its development. In particular we wish to thank Commissioner Bert Bell and his assistant, Joe Labrum, as well as all the club owners, coaches, and publicity men, notably Russ Gestner of Cleveland, Ed Kiely of Pittsburgh, Bud Erickson of Detroit, and Ed Hogan of Philadelphia. Our sincere thanks, also go to Bruce Lee of the San Francisco Chronicle, Arthur Daley of the New York Times, and Joe King of the New York World Telegram.

Source material has been drawn from the files of Sport Magazine and The Sporting News, as well as from the following books:

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For permission to reprint copyrighted material, our thanks are gratefully extended to the following publishers:

Corinne Griffith—for the quotation on page 202, taken from her book, My Life with the Redskins, published by A. S. Barnes & Company, Inc., 1947.

David McKay Company—for the quotation on page 175, taken from the book, My Kind of Football, by Steve Owen, 1952.

C. C. Spink & Son—for the quotation on page 94, taken from the book, *The Life Story of Sammy Baugh*, by Richard P. McCann, 1949.

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